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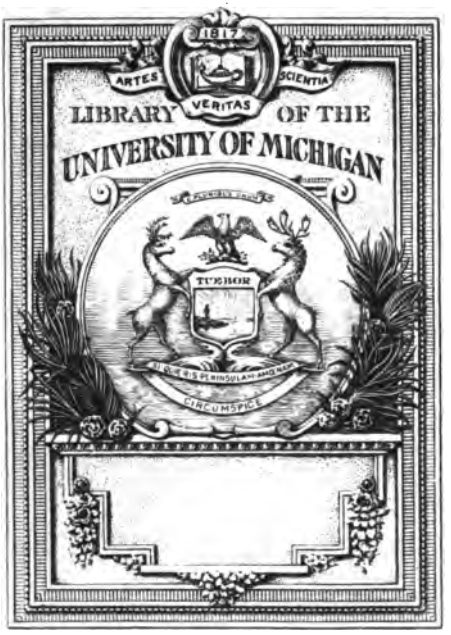
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Volume 1


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PIECES

OF

IRISH HISTORY,

ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE

CONDITION OF THE CATHOLICS OF IRELAND,

OF

THE ORIGIN AND PROGRESS

OF THE POLITICAL SYSTEM

OF THE UNITED IRISHMEN;

AND OF THEIR TRANSACTIONS

WITH

THE ANGLO-IRISH GOVERNMENT.

PUBLISHED BY

WILLIAM JAMES MAC NEVEN.

NEW-YORK:

PRINTED FOR BERNARD DORNIN,

NO. 136, PEARL-STREET.

1807.

DISTRICT OF NEW-YORK, ss.

BE it remembered, that on the seventh day of July, in the thirty-second year of the independence of the United States of America, *William James Mac Neven* and *Thomas Addis Emmet*, of the said district, have deposited in this office the title of a Book, the right whereof they claim as proprietors, in the words following, to wit:—

"Pieces of Irish History, illustrative of the condition of "the Catholics of Ireland: of the origin and progress of the "political system of the United Irishmen, and of their transac- "tions with the Anglo-Irish government. Published by Wil- "liam James Mac Neven."

In conformity to the act of the Congress of the United States, entitled "An act for the encouragement of "learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts and "books to the authors and proprietors of such copies "during the times therein mentioned," and also to an [SEAL.] act, entitled "An act supplementary to an act entitled "An act for the encouragement of learning, by se- "curing the copies of maps, charts and books to the "authors and proprietors of such copies during the "times therein mentioned," and extending the benefits "thereof to the arts of designing, engraving and "etching historical and other prints."

EDWARD DUNSCOMB,
Clerk of the district of New-York.

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INTRODUCTION.

By W. J. MAC NEVEN.

THE storm of abusive misrepresentation, with which the proceedings, motives and objects, of a large majority of the Irish people have been recently assailed in this city, has forced the editor to submit to the public the following pieces concerning the more recent history of his native country. The same virulence of invective, the same violation of truth, the same distortion of fact, that have marked the conduct of the English faction towards the United Irishmen in Europe, have been revived against them here by the retainers and hirelings of the same enemy.

Those outrages seem to have lain ready for explosion, and the match to have been applied, when the pretensions of Mr. Rufus King to public confidence were made a subject of enquiry, at the late election for New-York. That gentleman, while minister from this republic to the English court, thought fit to resist the emigration of a considerable number of avowed republicans, many of whom were men of large properties, from Ireland to America. The consequence to them was a four years close

captivity, without any other pretext than Mr. King's opposition; because the British government felt, or pretended, a fear of leaving them at large amidst its enemies in Europe.—These facts were, simply stated by Mr. Emmet to a meeting of the Hibernian Provident Society, at the request of several of its members. All at once, the adherents of Mr. King were excited to the utmost fury, as though his conduct could not be candidly represented, without his character being greatly injured.

If his acts against the Irish state prisoners in 1798, be really meritorious, though so hurtful to them, they return him good for evil in recording those acts for the benefit of his reputation; and he will allow, at least, that those who suffered from his zeal have the right to complain of their misfortune. To do men an immense mischief, and to suppress every mention of it, are such practises as a minister to the court of St. James will never, we trust, be able to naturalize in America.

It was not representing this free country in the most amiable or dignified manner, to join the vindictive ministry of a powerful monarch, and impose pains and penalties on those whose misfortune it was to have made unsuccessful efforts in the cause of liberty. If a feeling of generous sympathy had led the American minister out of the line of his official duty, to interfere rather in behalf than against men who were driven from their homes, like the first settlers of America, by the civil and religious persecutions of the English; he could not be said to have betrayed the principles of his government, nor to have deserted the cause of the revolution.

The sufferings of Ireland are as well known to all Europe, as the very existence of that ill-fated country; so much, indeed, that it would have been no presumption in Mr. King to form,

concerning

concerning the disturbances there, a deliberate opinion;* but then an avowed acquaintance with their causes, and a collateral preference of their authors, could not be acknowledged with any decency. What was tyranny against the Americans, would necessarily be tyranny against the Irish; and the resistance so glorious in one country, could not be accounted a crime in the other.

"You must be sensible," says Mr. King, (letter to H. Jackson) "that I possess no sufficient means of forming an opinion respecting your sentiments." And was it indeed requisite to conciliate the sentiments of Mr. King, in order to have ingress to the United States! This assumption of authority is surely very lofty, and not less unwarrantable. A passport is not necessary to a foreigner for coming into this country, as it is in England, France and Russia; because the genius of its government, in unison with its laws, is to suppose every man innocent until the contrary is proved.

But with all this affected reserve on the subject of the disturbances in Ireland, and the want of means for forming an opinion, it appears among the contradictory passages of this extraordinary letter, that in reality an opinion was formed, and an apprehension entertained that those emigrants would arrange themselves on the side of those whom Mr. King has called the *malcontents*, because opposed to him and his party; but who are known in the country itself by the distinctive appellation of republicans.—The Irish, forced to emigrate by the pressure of an intolerable government, and desirous of an asylum in America, were men who had proved on their native soil their adherence to the principles of the American declaration of independence. Their sen-

* "*Without presuming to form an opinion on the subject of the late disturbances in Ireland.*"—*Rufus King's letter to Mr. Jackson.*

timents were certainly not equivocal. The principles of the American constitution were their principles—they had drawn them from that source, and they ought never to be objects of jealousy to its friends. But if this country should contain nominal republicans and real tories, abettors of the English system, the United Irishmen may at all times expect to encounter their hostility.

The very oppressions which the Irish suffer at home, teach them to prize the freedom of America more ardently than is always done by her native sons, who have the exalted privilege of knowing nothing of despotism, but what they learn from the description of other nations. If they may then be justly reputed the best Americans who feel most devotion to our republican institutions, those, whom Mr. King sought to exclude from our shores, will be found to have juster pretensions, than many who claim extraordinary merit for being a degree or two removed from an European ancestor.

Mr. Rufus King would not permit himself to decide on the real deserts of those men; but he looked to the naked fact of their being traduced and outlawed by their enemies. Nothing could surely be more partial or unjust, at a time that he was taking an important step by which they were to be materially affected. It did not follow that what a despotic government did against them was therefore proper; for they might possess the virtues of Hancock, notwithstanding the proscription of George the Third. It would have been more legitimate to conclude in the first instance, if judgment were to be given without enquiry, that the victims of tyrannic power were upright men, advocates of liberty, and of the rights of their country. The banishment of Aristides was disgraceful only to his oppressors, and he must be as unjust as they, who would overlook the cause, and decide against his character, from the bare fact of his exile. The banishment and execution of Sydney were never known

known to prejudice the immortal name of that patriot, nor were the liberal and enlightened ever seen to separate his memory from the execration of a cruel government. Those men so very seditious in Boston and Charleston in 1775 were not less the true friends of their country, patriots of whom she will hereafter boast as the pillars of her glory and happiness, when she will perhaps endeavour to hide the stain of the servility that opposed them, and that would be forgotten, but for the succession of tories, who, by their slavish principles and despotic acts, compel us to look occasionally to the enemies of our freedom.

Could it be overlooked, that the character of men contending for their liberties was not to be taken from the description of the British cabinet? Were not the most opprobrious epithets during the American war applied in England by the king's friends, and in America by the king's tories, to the leaders of the American revolution? John Hancock, Samuel Adams, George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, George Clinton, were branded as traitors to their lawful sovereign, ambitious demagogues, deserving the gallows. And if success had not hallowed resistance, without being able to add to its justice, those illustrious men, as well as Greene, Gates, Henry and Montgomery, and all the other great and intrepid spirits whom republican America honours in the calender of her heroes, would have suffered the obloquy of slaves, and the vengeance of a tyrant.

The British government regards a certain set of men as malefactors—and because it does, the American minister is to entertain the same opinion! No body can doubt that this was very complaisant towards the British government; but was it equally impartial towards those unfortunate men? When the Christians in Japan were persecuted for the alledged danger of their principles, if they had formed a compact with their idolatrous and

powerful

powerful oppressors for emigrating to Europe, where those very principles were revered for which they were proscribed at home; what should we think of the Dutch ambassador who would protest against their emigration, because their pagan tyrants swept them off in quality of malefactors? Would it be thought a good defence of his conduct to say, that they might join the malcontent advocates of liberty of conscience in Europe, for that they had rebelled against the lawful idols of Japan?

It does not appear how Mr. King could have any duty to perform for America, contrary to the constitution of the country, and not even authorized by the instructions of the government. By the ninth section of the constitution, the migration of such persons as any of the existing states might think proper to admit, could not be prohibited by congress itself, when it was prohibited by Mr. King. None of the states had enacted any prohibition—the entrance to the union was consequently open to all the world, until Mr. King officially shut it against a number of republicans from Ireland. In doing this, he violated the constitution in form and in substance; he sinned against the letter and the spirit. Nor is this judgment the biassed opinion of the suffering party alone: it appears to be that of the electors of New-York, who, the other day, would not trust him with the guardianship of their rights.

The law of nations will bear out Mr. King as little as the constitution of America; for though it does not permit that one country shall make another a place of legal and compulsory banishment for crimes which are equally repugnant to the laws of every community, it did not hinder the friends of Irish independence, for the present subdued by its enemies, from entering with them into a negociation, the basis of which was this tacit acknowledgment—

"Both parties cannot peaceably exist in the same realm."

You

You are by the foreign aid of England, stronger in Ireland than we are. We will choose another residence more congenial to our principles, and to secure to you that we shall not pass into an enemy's country, we consent to your having a negative on the place of our choice; but we must have an equal negative on yours, to protect us against the effects of your resentment. Both parties, however, agreed on the same place, and the departure of the emigrants would have been the voluntary result of a compact.

Here is no judicial banishment.

The republicanism of the emigrants, however it might have been looked upon by the British government, and may at this day be looked upon by Mr. King, is certainly no crime against the laws and government of the United States. That spirit that did not crouch to a corrupt monarchy, but that dared to resist absolute power and flagrant injustice, would only render its possessor the better citizen of a republic, and is not foreign to the genius of this constitution.

Unsupported by the law of nations, condemned by the constitution, Mr. King disappointed the assurance given by the congress of 1775 to the Irish nation, with a prophetic view of the consequences of British tyranny, *that the fertile regions of America would in time afford them a safe asylum from oppression.* An unfortunate opportunity occurred of proving the sincerity of that pledge; and if we were to judge by his conduct only, it would appear an insincere and hollow artifice to procure temporary assistance; but the honour of America is not tarnished by his acts—it is preserved in other hands.

It seems as if this interference, for which Mr. King acknowledges he was without authority,* had originated altogether in London,

* *Vide letter to Mr. Jackson.*

London, and that the motive must have been very urgent which did not allow him to commit the Irish state prisoners to the mercies of the Adams administration, and to the hospitality of the alien law. It was quite nugatory to apply for the consent of his government, in a case where it had none to give or withhold. The President, 'tis true, was empowered to send out of the country all such aliens as he should judge dangerous to the peace and safety of the Union; but he had no authority to prevent any man from coming into these states, where security of his residence was left to depend on the correctness of his own demeanor. The law did not proscribe through precaution, nor condemn before the fact, and it were well if the minister had been as impartial. The British government, however, found more advantage in the part he performed: his refusal furnished a pretext for violating the faith that had been pledged to the state prisoners, and the odium of this perfidy was to be removed from the English minister. The treaty with them not proving as useful as was expected, the Anglo-Irish government grew more than ever incensed, and gratified its rancour thro' the interference of Mr. King. As a matter of self-defence, therefore, those whom that gentleman already injured were justified in preventing, as far as they might, his having an opportunity of injuring them again. He had unequivocally taken part with their oppressors, and, for any thing they knew to the contrary, he continued still in the same disposition. As republicans too, it was no recommendation to their confidence, that he wanted sympathy for the struggles of an enslaved people endeavouring to break from bondage.

One of the offences charged upon the Irish, and one among the many pretexts for refusing redress to the catholics, is, that sixteen thousand of them fought on the side of America. That many more thousands are ready to maintain the declaration of independence, will be their second offence; nor is it perhaps less true, that the abettors of British maxims of government in this

this country, will be always desirous to exclude them from its bosom.

Some, even of those republicans whom Mr. King presumed to preclude from the United States, found an asylum in Portugal, and there was no remonstrance on the part of the minister of that despotic country. It was reserved for the envoy of a republic to take that ungenerous step, unauthorized by the law of nations, contrary to the first law of America, and hostile to the practice and policy of her government.

But in order to justify this unwarrantable act of Mr. King, the United Irishmen are defamed by his partizans, who attempt to establish that a resistance to George the Third should be an exclusion from America; who brand with the name of crime the most just and necessary opposition to oppression, if that monarch be the oppressor. What sort, then, of Americans are they who call it crime to rebel against tyranny? How much fitter such beings for crawling in the servitude of monarchies, than for being members of a free community, the rights of which they hold but to betray. So long as they avoid giving any precise explanation of their political principles, with respect to this government, the secret articles of their faith cannot, perhaps, be better ascertained than by remarking the opinions they form on the events that take place in other countries. Let it then be remembered that Mr. King and his supporters claim the confidence of the republicans in America, by declaring their adherence to the British enormities in Ireland, and by calumniating all those who were opposed to them.

What calumny, what abuse was not employed by the British government and its agents to sink the fame and sully the character of the leaders in the American revolution! If these slanders were to be evidence with posterity, the cause of free-

dom would be called faction, the rule of despotism would be named order, vice and virtue would change appellations, George the Third would appear a beneficent sovereign, and Warren a seditious demagogue. Would that king's proscription of Washington as a rebel and traitor, be good evidence that Washington deserved to be hanged? Would the abuse of Franklin by one of his cabinet ministers, be sufficient to convict the illustrious philosopher of America of the worst offences? Then what is to sanctify evidence from the same tyranny against men who strove to emulate the example of those patriots in a cause equally just, and more necessary?

Do those who are oppressed, owe allegiance to the tyranny that grinds them? A people conquered by force and fraud, held in subjection by the sword, and cruelly treated in their servitude, have nothing to consider but the means and season of resistance. It is for them a calculation of prudence, and not at all a question of moral duty. The Irish had seen that French armies, French fleets, French treasure were solicited and obtained by America, and that this succour had powerfully contributed to her independence. In similar circumstances, they solicited, and were promised similar aid; but the promise remaining yet unperformed, Ireland is still in bondage.

As, however, the power of England had been humbled, her tyranny avenged, in the instance of these United States, through the co-operation of France, though afforded by an absolute prince from motives of self-interest, it was perfectly congenial with the views of a country aiming at emancipation, to court her alliance again, and more confidently, after she became a republic.

Yet a league so natural and necessary, is impudently imputed as a crime to the United Irishmen, who are called agents of France, when they are in reality the truest friends of their country.

country. It is nonsense to talk of three-fourths of the population of a great nation being the agents of a foreign power. A faction may betray a people, but a people can scarcely betray itself. The Orangemen sacrifice Ireland to the views of Britain, and their own emolument; but the United Irish seek the independence of their country, and are too numerous to be otherwise benefited than by her welfare. The absurd accusation of their being agents of France, is uttered by those tories only who condemn every thing that tends to promote the independence and freedom of Ireland.

Such also was the cry of the traitor Arnold when he joined the English against his native country. He alledged, to justify himself and criminate the American rebels, that they had formed a league with France. While consummating his treason against the independence of the states, he affected to reprobate the co-operation that prevented their returning as enslaved colonies under the British yoke. In the same way, the monarchists and British hirelings accuse the alliance of the United Irishmen with France, exactly because that alliance is necessary to the emancipation of Ireland; exactly because the domination of England, through her army, through her gold, through the traitorous adherence of the faction of loyalists in her pay, cannot be removed by the unassisted efforts of the Irish. The perfidious recommendation of these advisers is to have recourse to any means but such as would be effectual.

Nevertheless it is a fact historically proved, that Ireland obtained no redress of grievances but such as was extorted from her oppressor, and that, in some measure, through the dread of France.

Until the difficulties of the American war beset the British throne, and lessened its sense of security at home; until the powerful alliance of France helped to withdraw the colonies

from the yoke, and make these states the freest country in the universe; until the fleet of England skulked away before that of France in the Channel, and an emancipating army might have been landed in Ireland as well as in America; until the requisition of the Irish people, reinforced by these circumstances, was made for redress with arms; not a link was taken from the heavy chain of oppression that bound the freedom and prosperity of Ireland for ages. Then also, for the first time, the enormity of the popery laws appeared severe and impolitic to the British government.

During the interval of peace and strength between the close of the American war and the beginning of the French revolution, the wretchedness of the Irish was again forgotten. But these latter, rendered wise by experience, preferred their claims amidst the renewed embarrassments of their rulers; once more concession was procured from fear; George the Third, disturbed by the triumphs of France and the enthusiasm of liberty, recommended his Irish subjects to his Irish Parliament, and a reluctant repeal of the greatest part of the abominable popery code was obtained on that occasion. An abstract of these laws is given in this publication, such as they existed at the beginning of the French revolution, that the admirers of the British government may read in them the measure of its advantages to four millions of subjects, and the mighty reasons these men had for being loyal. That the laws have since been mostly repealed, is due to the persevering zeal of the catholic committee, to the enlightened co-operation of the United Irishmen, and to the terrors of French invasion, enforcing concession on the alarmed policy of the British government. The repeal did not flow from justice—for this had slept, until the army was to be removed from home to subdue the cause of liberty in Flanders. Nor was it yielded only to the spirit of the people; for as soon as the French navy was ruined, the system of bigotry and exclusion returned, the popery code was once more part of the constitution

constitution, the catholic bill and reform were scouted together from the precincts of parliament, the most vindictive persecution began against those who had extracted privilege from opportunity, the redress granted in law was rendered nugatory in practice, and as the dread of France subsided, the usual persecuting policy of the British government revived. Let them judge of the importance of the cause by the magnitude of the effect, who see how much was obtained when that dread was pressing, and that nothing will be granted now that it is removed to a distance. The king's conscience could capitulate with his fears, but is too sanctified to yield to justice.

This best auxiliary to the cause of Ireland has been lately recognised as such in express terms by Lord Grenville, and other members of the British cabinet. France, says his lordship, is become so much stronger by the destruction of the power of Prussia, that it is advisable to grant that redress of grievances this session, which ministers evaded the session before. Because Ireland, he adds, is likely to become the theatre of war, it is expedient to conciliate that large portion of the population, which has been hitherto the most oppressed.

Thanks then to the enemies of England for every amelioration of the condition of her Irish subjects. Her spontaneous dispensations to them are chains and taxes. She herself formed an alliance with the Turk and with the Pope, with every power however distant or however hated, in order to crush the nascent liberties of a rival; but she imputes it as a crime to another nation, that it seeks foreign aid for the recovery of its liberties. Her dominion over the Irish is, and ever has been, unjust, ungenerous, and tyrannical. She has confiscated nearly the whole island three times in the space of 200 years. Her lordly adventurers habitually stirred up insurrection there for the express purpose of confiscation, as her habits create a famine in India for the sake of fortune. And what is to render

light

light this yoke, the character of which was the same in times past, as it is in the times present?

When England suffered under the domestic despotism of James the Second, she could invite the Prince of Orange to her assistance with a Dutch army, and she calls that a glorious revolution; but the benefit of her own example must not be pleaded against her own tyranny, and she and her partisans calls this justice. Her minions every where, the Orangeman at home, the tory in America, these persecutors of Ireland's faithful adherents, may nevertheless behold, with mortified envy, a nation in which six centuries of slavery have not destroyed the love of freedom, nor the desire of independence; and let them read, in this high-minded perseverance, the sure earnest of emancipation. Though the United Irish do not now possess liberty, they evince by their conduct, that they deserve it: while that of their calumniators here proves how much they themselves are displaced, in being citizens of the only free country in the world.

While the conclusions of history attest the necessity of independence, the partizans of English domination propose conjecture as a remedy for the future, and would have Ireland be contented, because they predict a happier æra from the Union. But of the purpose for which this measure was carried, and of the tendency of its benefits, some idea may be formed by the following, among a thousand anecdotes:—Sir James May, collector of the port of Waterford, assembled his yeomen on the general parade in that city, and left it to their option whether they would sign in favour of the Union, or be shipped to Botany Bay. Driven to this alternative, they embraced England rather than transportation, and were numbered with the enlightened advocates of the incorporation of both parliaments.

Judging of this last penal law, the act of Union, by all those that preceded, its effecting the ruin and degradation of one country

country will be no motive for its relinquishment by the other, until the return of new embarrassments, when the spirit of the people, and the dread of France, by overt force or extorted concession, shall cause its repeal. In the mean time, Ireland is as usefully represented as England would be after an Union with the great nation, in virtue of which she would be allowed to send in the proportion of one member to five to Bonaparte's conservative senate at Paris. What in reality can the Union prove to Ireland, but the means of giving immediately into the hands of England, the dominion which she exercised more circuitously before: thus making that chain press closer, which was always galling. The conclusive evidence of history is, that every measure to the disadvantage of Ireland was uniformly introduced, and every thing in her favour as uniformly resisted, by the government party. Her dependence and subjection had already existed before the Union was enacted; they characterised the condition of Ireland during several centuries of degradation and calamity, as long as the British parliament could make laws to bind her.

"From the revolution," said Mr. Pitt, while debating the Irish propositions in 1785, "the system of England had been "that of debarring Ireland from the enjoyment and use of her "own resources, of making the kingdom completely subservient "to the interests and opulence of another, without suffering it "to share in the bounties of nature, or profit by the industry of "its own citizens."

Such is the effect of the connexion with Britain, as truly depicted by the minister of that country. The constitution and legislature also, which the United Irishmen wished to reform, receive the following character from the authority, unquestionable on this point, of the same minister and his colleagues:

"But

"But the imperfection of the Irish constitution is admitted, "and to that must be added the complicated grievances of "the country at large, &c.—all producing in a proportionate "degree, *misery in one extreme, and oppression in the other.*"*

"The course of events which for some years past have taken "place in Ireland, have firmly rivetted me in the opinion, that "there must be something radically wrong in the internal situa-"tion of Ireland."†

"I maintain that the disorders of Ireland have grown chiefly "out of the constitution of Ireland, established for near a cen-"tury and a half; and it is impossible that a government, agi-"tated as that of the sister kingdom has been, a government "dislocated in every limb, could enjoy health, or long survive "these diseases, some slow, some acute, which make her sickly "of aspect, and feeble of heart; but the seeds of the mischief "are in the constitution itself."‡

"Does there, or does there not, exist a necessity for a change "in the system of the Irish government. I declare I never con-"versed with any well informed man from Ireland, who did not "say that the present state of things, as they now exist in that "country, could not continue, consistent with the general safety "of the empire."§

"It is a melancholy, but I fear an incontestible truth, that "the state of Ireland has at no period of its history, with which "we are acquainted, been such as to afford satisfaction to any "mind

* *Speech of Mr. Pitt, debates on the Union. Vide Debret's Parliamentary Register.*

† *Lord Hawkesbury.* Ibid.

‡ *Mr. Windham.* Ibid.

§ *Lord Grenville.* Ibid.

"mind that can appreciate the conditions of civil society. The "bounty of Providence has indeed been displayed in that coun- "try by a fertile soil, and by abundant means of internal im- "provement and prosperity; its inhabitants have not been less "distinguished than those of Great Britain, in corresponding "stations in life, for eloquence, for literary and scientific ac- "quirements, and for those talents and exertions which have "established the naval and military renown of the British empire. "Their form of government is the same as ours, but it wants its "true characteristic—it does not, like ours, bestow and receive "general confidence and protection; it is not, like ours, con- "nected with the indissoluble ties, with the obvious interests, "the feelings and the sentiments, of the great body of the "people."*

"I might add, without exaggeration, that in the six hundred "years since the reign of Henry the Second, there has been "more unhappiness in Ireland, than in any other civilized na- "tion, not actually under the visitation of pestilence or internal "war; neither prosperity, nor tranquility, nor safety, were "to be expected from a government founded in the pretensions "of a small part of the community, to monopolize the repre- "sentation, patronage, and resources of the whole."†

Here we have the incontestible evidence of the adversaries of Irish independence, to substantiate the evils of the connexion which the United Irishmen wished to dissolve, and the vices of the constitution which they meant to reform. They and the king's ministers agree upon the iniquity of the system to which Ireland was subjected: both parties equally admit that the Irish constitution was full of disease, incapable of giving protection, undeserving of confidence: that this connexion and this consti-

* *Mr. Addington. Vide Debret's Parliamentary Register.*
† *Lord Aukland.* Ibid.

tution involved Ireland in disorder, poverty, turbulence and wretchedness, made her suffer for six hundred years more than any other nation upon earth, and produced the *extremes of misery and oppression.*

The English government, the very source of all those evils, proposes, as a remedy, that the Irish shall place themselves more fully in its power. The United Irishmen, on the contrary, appeal to history against this madness. They observe, in 1779, when a free trade was extorted from the necessities of England, that this first step to prosperity was a step towards independence. They find in 1782, by withdrawing farther from the control of England, in establishing the exclusive right of legislating for herself, that Ireland added to her dignity, and increased her happiness.

Thus the proscribed and calumniated Irish, whose crime is to have endeavoured to substitute a different constitution in place of that which produced the extremes of misery and oppression, may, if they value such testimony, quote in support of their proceedings the confessions of those very ministers who persecuted them for such acts. But it is for the guilty to justify; for them who dealt banishment, murder, torture, and martial-law, among the opponents of that connexion and constitution, which have produced more unhappiness where they were established, than any other civilized nation ever suffered in six hundred years.—What demons of evil! to uphold a system so barbarous, by deeds so foul. If they be more wicked, they are less base, however, than the persons who approve of that system of conduct, without the same motives of personal interest. It is owing to the attacks and calumnies of such men that this publication is offered to the world for the elucidation of transactions which, were they not maliciously misrepresented, it would now be unnecessary to explain.

The

The first piece after the introduction, is a part only of a larger work, formerly contemplated by its author, and so far executed while he was confined in Fort George; but which, from the urgency of other avocations, he has entirely laid aside. It is so luminous as far as it proceeds, that we must regret it could not all be finished by the same hand. It contains information not to be found elsewhere, consisting for the most part of things personally known to the writer, or communicated to him by friends and intimates, who were themselves conversant with what they related. Nevertheless, the essay of Mr. Emmet is more a relation of what was done by the United Irishmen, than by their opponents. A more ample detail, therefore, of the acts of outrage and despotism practised by the Anglo-Irish government during the same period, is still wanting to complete the picture.

After this, there intervenes a large chasm; the third piece being no more than the recital of one transaction, which took place at the distance of two years and a half from any of those related in the essay.

Indeed nothing here forestalls the intended publication of which I gave a short prospectus last year. One that shall exhibit a comprehensive view of the policy of the English cabinet in regard to Ireland, that shall detail its baleful nature in the miseries it inflicted, and the prosperity it marred; that shall connect with these the various acts of licentiousness and cruelty of its agents, whether corrupted natives or others; shew the disastrous but instructive consequences of subjection to a foreign power, and develope to Irishmen the full extent of their obligations to Great Britain.

PART OF AN ESSAY

TOWARDS THE HISTORY OF IRELAND,

By T. A. EMMET.

AFTER the king's recovery from his indisposition in 1789, the parliament of Ireland became an object of ridicule and contempt from its profligate versatility. Several measures, founded more or less on popular principles, were proposed by the Opposition; they were, however, uniformly lost, and the failure seemed to excite but little public interest.

The year 1790 was for the most part spent in the agitation and corruption of contested elections.

But an event was now taking place, which seemed calculated to make an epoch in the history of every nation, and which has peculiarly acted on the condition of Ireland. The French revolution was beginning to unfold its immense importance. In order the better to understand its effects on that country, it may be advisable to take a short view of its situation and political sentiments at that period.

The

The situation of Ireland, in respect to strength, opulence, prosperity and happiness, was never a subject of exultation or praise to the humane or reflecting mind. Her destitution of every manufacture but one, her fisheries unexplored, her noble harbours unoccupied, her navigable rivers unheeded, her inland improvements neglected, her unreclaimed bogs and mountains, her uncultivated fields, her unemployed, houseless, starved, uneducated peasantry, had been long the theme of sorrow to the patriot, and of contempt to the unfeeling. That her situation, in many of these respects, had greatly improved within the ten preceding years, could not admit of doubt; but enough still remained to excite considerable discontents in a suffering people, and to deserve the most serious attention from an honest government. Whatever may have been the amount of those grievances, they gave rise to very opposite opinions, as to their cause.

Some supposed—what has also been asserted of the negro race—that the Irish were an inferior, semibrutal people, incapable of managing the affairs of their country, and submitted, by the necessity of their nature, to some superior power, from whose interference and strength they must exclusively derive their domestic tranquility, as well as their foreign protection; and to whose bounty they must owe whatever they can enjoy of trade, commerce, comfort or opulence. Those who entertained this opinion, said, that from the insignificant extent and unfortunate locality of Ireland, she was doomed to be dependent either on England or France; and that, of course, not only gratitude, but policy should make her cling to that state, with whom her interests had been interwoven for ages, and from whose fostering protection she had derived her civil and religious liberty, together with all the blessings of which she could boast. These assertions, both of a natural inferiority, and of the immutable necessity of submission, which had been for ages not uncommon in England, chiefly found their Irish advocates in those who might lay claim to be regenerated by the force of English connexions

connexions and habits, or who, at least, felt themselves qualified, by a peculiar felicity of exception, to fill the offices and enjoy the emoluments of the Irish government.

Others, however, whose pride, perhaps, would not permit them to allow a natural inferiority, asserted, that the source of Ireland's misfortunes was to be traced back to remote antiquity. "History, and a knowledge of her laws and government enable "us," they said, "to detect the cause of all her calamities. "She was subdued and ruled by the sword; she was depopu- "lated by the ravages of war, and wasted by perpetual and "bloody conflicts between settlers and natives; she was occa- "sionally tranquilised by despoiling from a fresh portion of "the aboriginal inhabitants, their hereditary properties; and "repeopled through confiscation and forfeitures. Even the "Reformation itself, by which so many other countries were il- "lustrated and improved, was made an instrument for bruta- "lizing Ireland. Without consulting the opinions of the Irish; "without compassionating or endeavouring by reason to dispel "their errors; without affording means of improvement, or time "for those means to operate, their religion was regulated by act "of parliament, to the precise standard of English faith. Al- "though the natives entirely rejected, and scarcely any, even of "the settlers, adopted these new tenets, yet, by force of the act "of uniformity, every man was compelled to attend on, and "conform to the Protestant worship; while, by force of a royal "proclamation, every man was interdicted the exercise of the "Catholic religion, its clergy were banished, and the severest "penalties denounced against those who dared to give them hos- "pitality or shelter. Nor was this all, a code of disfranchise- "ment, robbery, persecution, oppression and debasement was "further, and in more civilized times, erected as a buttress to "what might in mockery have been called, *the church of Ireland.* "The inhabitants of that devoted country, in name a nation, in "fact a province planted with a colony—were studiously kept

"at

" at variance and distracted by civil and religious pretexts, that
" they might never coalesce for the attainment of national objects.
" Her government was permitted to extend over the land, only
" in proportion as the English pale was widened; and even then,
" its members, for the most part, from their birth or dispositions,
" its feelings, legislation and ordinances, were entirely English.
" Whenever a clashing of interests between the two isles was per-
" ceived or apprehended, Ireland was forced to yield to the over-
" bearing ascendancy of an insatiable and jealous rival. Her
" commerce was fettered, her manufactures surrendered, her raw
" materials delivered over, her population drained, her resources
" exhausted, her agriculture neglected—all to aggrandize the
" power from which her government was derived, and with which
" her governors are connected.

" If, in one instance, a brilliant exception cheers the afflicted
" memory, to what is it to be attributed—to the military array
" of Ireland—to the transitory display of something like na-
" tional energy in the Irish people—to the alarm of England—
" to the panic of its government, lest another oppressed province
" should imitate the example of America, and assert its indepen-
" dence, in alliance with France. The restrictions on the Irish
" trade were repealed by the English parliament itself, in
" the moment of consternation and weakness: their removal
" was not a gift from liberality or affection, but a restoration
" from fear. Even the constitutional arrangements of 1782, in-
" significant as subsequent experience has shewn them to be,
" were solely produced by the momentary influence of the Irish
" people, on the English government. The parliament of Ire-
" land constantly resisted every proposal for asserting the na-
" tional independence, so long as that resistance was agreeable
" to the ministers of England; nor did its cameleon colour
" change, until the object on which its undeviating eyes were
" fixed had assumed a short-lived splendour.

" Those

"Those arrangements, however, gave to Ireland no more "than the meer name of independence. She is still a province, "and still destitute of a national government. Her rulers are "English, and totally divested of all kind of Irish responsibility. "Her legislature is devoted to the English ministry, and practi- "cally unconnected with the Irish nation. On the lords it "would be absurd to bestow a thought; nor are the commons "deserving of more attention. Three-fourths of the people are "formally excluded, by the Catholic laws, from being counted "among their constituents; and the other fourth is but as dust "in the balance. Exclusive of private adventurers in the poli- "tical market, about thirty individuals, principally lords, pos- "sess the power of returning a majority in the house of com- "mons, and even two-thirds of the representation are engrossed "by less than one hundred persons. These wholesale dealers as "regularly sell their members as a country grazier does his cat- "tle, and the steady purchaser is the British agent. Such is "the Irish government.

"As to inferiority of nature," added they, "it is peculiarly "absurd, when asserted of a people composed of settlers from "so many different countries. It is obviously false of the Irish, "who, even at home, though deprived of whatever stimulus to "genius or industry may result from trade and commerce; "though nearly interdicted from education by law, and for the "most part, debarred from it by poverty; though brayed and "crushed under the weight of so many vicious institutions, yet "show themselves sagacious, brave, warm-hearted and enter- "prising: but when abroad, they are released from the op- "pressions of their native land, and can enter into the career of "fair and honourable competition; then, even unsupported by "interest or connexions, they prove themselves worthy of the "utmost confidence, and of the highest distinctions in council "and in the field.

"As to the natural necessity of seeking protection from a "superior state, it is scarcely credible," said they, "of a country "which is intersected with navigable rivers and indented with "the finest bays; which is blest with a temperate climate, a "diversified and fruitful soil, productive mines and inexhaustible "fisheries; which is also situated in one of the most advan- "tageous points for universal commerce, particularly since the "rapidly encreasing demands of America, seem to open an in- "calculable market. The assertion cannot be true of a coun- "try, which, in itself protected by its insular situation, contains "19,000 square miles: which, by being sacrificed to the ag- "grandisement of England, and turned into its best market, "instead of its most formidable competitor, has probably en- "creased the capital and opulence of that kingdom by almost "one third; which, notwithstanding repeated wars, constant "emigrations, and the want of trade, manufactures, or agricul- "ture, has been able to create and support a population of "five millions; which furnishes to Europe some of her most "distinguished officers, to the British army about one half of "its soldiers, and to her navy almost two thirds of its seamen; "and which, after paying the expences of its own extravagant "government, and many useless establishments, is able to pour "without reserve or return, four millions annually into the lap "of Britain—even perhaps an infinitely larger sum, if a fair es- "timate could be made of the enormous rents, unproductively "remitted to Irish absentees—and of the losses, that Ireland still "sustains, to the benefit of England, by the slowly disappearing "effects of those commercial restraints, which for a century, an- "nihilated her trade, in every article but linen; and which, by "their surviving consequences, still continue to surrender her fo- "reign and domestic markets to a country, in natural produc- "tions, as well as in every commercial and manufacturing point "of view, essentially her rival."

Scarcely any, however, of those who entertained these senti-

ments,

ments, harboured a thought of destroying the connexion between the two kingdoms. "Ireland," said they, "in its early infancy "received an incurable organic injury, which will always prevent "her rising to her natural strength and stature as a nation.—"But since it is incurable, it must be borne with resignation; "and the best office that affection or science can perform, is to "relieve, by occasional palliatives, whatever symptoms may be-"come urgent or dangerous. Let us endeavour to procure "some alleviation for our peasantry, by encouraging agriculture "by bettering their situation, and by mitigating their burthens "—let us bargain, as prudently as we can, for the commercial "arrangements that remain unsettled—but, above all things, let "us labour to give a national and patriotic spirit to our legisla-"ture, by restraining the force of English influence, by check-"ing the profligate extent of corruption, and by correcting the "enormously unequal and inadequate state of the representation "in parliament." Such were the views and objects of even the most ardent Irish patriots before the commencement of the French revolution.

It must not be supposed that one or other of the very opposite opinions already stated, respecting the cause of Ireland's calamities, and the system of policy she should pursue, was entertained, in its full extent, by every person in the country. On the contrary, each intermediate sentiment had its advocates; and, contradictory as the extremes may appear, they were sometimes blended, almost always diversified and modified, according to the different points of view, in which the British constitution and connexion were regarded, from interests or prejudices, from education or habits, from information or ignorance, from inconsiderateness or deep reflection. Perhaps a knowledge of these points of view, may be best obtained, by examining into the state and opinions of the leading religious sects.

Religion may be said to have separated Ireland into two

people, the Protestants and Catholics; the Protestants were divided into the members of the church of England and the Dissenters. Both of these had been in their origin foreign colonists, introduced and enriched in consequence of long continued massacres and warfare, of confiscations and new grants, of ousters under the popery laws, and acquisitions as protestant discoverers; by all of which the original Irish had been systematically dispossessed or extirpated, and the dependance of their country on another state, permanently secured.

The members of the church of England, not exceeding one tenth of the people, possessed almost the whole government and five-sixths of the landed property of the nation, which they inherited by odious and polluted titles. For a century they had nearly engrossed the profits and patronage of the church, the law, the revenue, the army, the navy, the magistracy and the corporations of Ireland, deriving their superiority and consequence from the interweaving of the ecclesiastical establishment with the civil authority of the country. Independent of religious animosity, their desire to retain what they possessed, made them regard with aversion and mistrust the catholics, whom they had oppressed, and from whom they dreaded a resumption of property, should any change render the measure practicable; and their eagerness to monopolize what they so largely enjoyed, excited the jealousy of the dissenters, who shared with them somewhat of the emoluments of power. Conscious also of their natural weakness, they saw their only security in the superiority and assistance of England; to the aggrandizement of which they were therefore uniformly devoted. The protection of that country was indeed afforded to them; but in return they paid the surrender of the commerce and liberties of Ireland.—During the American revolution, concurrent circumstances had enabled and emboldened the other sects to hurry them into measures, by which that commerce and those liberties were partially resumed; but their dispositions remained unchanged, and faithful

faithful to their interests, they still continued to defend the British connexion, as the bulwark of their importance and strength.

The Dissenters, who were originally settled for the most part in Ulster, regarded no doubt with filial affection the country from whence they came, and with contempt and dislike the people whom they displaced—they also detested catholics with the fanatic fervour that characterised the early disciples of Knox and Calvin. Their descendants, however, possessing few overgrown landed properties, and being mostly engaged in manufactures and trade, did not feel a dependance on England as essential to their existence or happiness; but they felt the commercial restrictions to which it gave rise as injurious to their prosperity and pursuits. They were twice as numerous as the Lutherans, and had not the same inducement of weakness and fears, for seeking support and succour in the arms of a foreign power.—The predilection for their native country being therefore checked by no extraneous causes, they gradually ceased to consider themselves in any other light than Irishmen—they became anxious for Ireland's welfare, and sensible to its wrongs. Lovers of Liberty, and almost republicans from religion, from education and early habits, they sympathised with the Americans, when that kindred people was struggling to shake off the British yoke—they principally composed in their own island the never-to-be-forgotten volunteers, and most energetically raised their voices and their arms in favour of its commercial freedom and constitutional independence, as far as those points were at that time understood. They were even suspected of aiming at separation from England. There was, however, no union of sentiment or sense of common interests among the different religious sects sufficiently strong to justify the hope that Ireland could maintain itself as a distinct power; and many, in whom the efforts of the transatlantic colonies had necessarily excited congenial

congenial wishes, apprehended that it must be dependant on either England or France.

In this alternative the dissenters saw no room to hesitate: for however great their admiration of America and its constitutions, they preferred England when contrasted with France, for the freedom of its government; and would not by a change of masters risk the horrors of popery and slavery which they had been taught to believe and boast, that their forefathers had combated and repelled. They however continued to be distinguished by their zeal in pursuit of parliamentary reform, and of every other measure founded on the principles of democracy and liberty.

The catholics were the descendents of the primitive Irish, or of those early settlers whom the reformation had identified with the aboriginal inhabitants. While in the violence of contest, the adherents of the pope every where regarded with hatred and horror the sects that had separated from his church, unquestionably the Irish catholics strongly participated in the common feelings; but they were rapidly disappearing in Ireland as in the rest of Europe. Those men, however, still continued estranged from their protestant countrymen by causes much more substantial than religious bigotry. They were nearly three-fourths of the population, and instead of enjoying the estates of their forefathers, they scarcely possessed one fifteenth of the landed property of the kingdom. To this state they had been reduced by various causes which might have been forgotten in the lapse of years, but that one still remained in the code called the Popery laws, which by its continued operation perpetuated the remembrance of the past, excited resentment for the present, and apprehensions for the future. Nor was that the only injury they experienced from these laws, which undermined the affections, controuled the attachments, restrained the industry, closed the prospects, prohibited the education, and punished the religion of those

those against whom they were enacted. This code had indeed suffered some mitigation within the last twelve years; but enough still remained to injure and to degrade.*

The effect of such a complicated system of persecution and oppression upon its victims may be easily conceived. The peasantry were reduced to a lamentable state of physical wretchedness and moral degradation. Even the gentry were broken down; and, though individually brave, and characteristically national, they seemed devoid of collective courage and political spirit. The catholics loved Ireland with enthusiasm, not only as their country, but as the partner of their calamities—to the actual interposition of England, or to its immediate influence, they ascribed their sufferings, civil and religious, with those of their forefathers. Hereditary hatred therefore, and sense of injury, had always conspired with national pride and patriotism, to make them adverse to that country, and enemies to British connexion. This they had often manifested, when there was a prospect of doing it with success. Now however they appeared only anxious to soften the rigours of their situation by an uniform support of government, which had carefully insinuated to them, that it was their protector against the other sects, but most especially against the dissenters, and that it alone prevented the severe execution of the popery laws. This obsequiousness on the part of the catholics, their former well known attachment to the French court, while they could hope for its assistance, and some remaining prejudices against their religion itself, caused them to be regarded by the protestants as unfit for liberty and hostile to its establishment.

Much mutual distrust and alienation naturally flowed from this difference of interests, sentiments and opinions. Some progress towards conquering them, had, indeed, been made in the time

* *See Appendix for a general view of the Popery Laws.*

time of the Volunteers; but the antipathies of centuries were far from being completely removed. For that reason, when, in the Volunteer convention, called together in 1784, for the purpose of bringing about a parliamentary reform, the delegates from Belfast, obedient to the early liberality and enlightened instructions of their constituents, supported the equal admission of Catholics to the rights of free men, they were left almost alone. The plan of representation proposed by that assembly, was founded on the exclusive privileges of protestants; and because its base was so narrow (the prejudices of the times not perhaps admitting of its being enlarged) it was easily defeated; for the people felt no interest in that from which they were to derive no benefit. The French revolution, however, paved the way for the entire accomplishment of what the volunteer institution had begun. A catholic country had, by its conduct, contradicted the frequently repeated dogma, that catholics are unfit for liberty; and the waning glory of the British constitution, seemed to fade before the regenerated government of France. These things sunk deep into the minds of the dissenters, who likewise saw another lesson of liberality enforced by their new teachers; that no religious opinions should be punished by civil disfranchisement. The catholics on their part, perhaps, derived some instruction from the same event. If there was any truth in the imputation of their being unfit for freedom, which is much more than problematical, it must be confessed that this striking example quickly changed their opinions and feelings; and that as the French revolution reconciled the protestant reformer to his catholic countrymen, so it ripened the catholics for liberty.

Another circumstance seemed also to draw nearer together the catholics and dissenters, and to excite in them a common admiration of that revolution; an identity of opinions and interests on the subject of tythes, which had for many years been a topic of violent discussion at home, and were recently abolished

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in France. No where perhaps on earth, were tythes more unpopular, or considered by the people as a greater grievance than in Ireland. They went to the support of an established clergy that preached a religion which was adopted by only one-tenth of the nation, and which was not merely disbelieved, but considered as heresy, by three-fourths of those that were forced to pay them. They had been the frequent subject of partial insurrection, and were always the fertile source of general discontent; so that the French reformers, by abolishing them, exceedingly encreased the numbers, and awoke the energy of their Irish admirers. Accordingly, the approbation of that revolution was very early, as well as extensive in Ireland; and the impulse it communicated to the public mind has given direction to all that country's subsequent political proceedings.

The example of France, in not permitting civil disqualification to result from any profession of religious belief, impressed itself most powerfully on the minds of many protestants. They felt not only the justice, but the wisdom of liberality, and became convinced that a similar measure, with an entire oblivion of all religious feuds and jealousies, was necessary to the peace and prosperity of Ireland. Some of them, considering more maturely the arguments respecting the admission of catholics to the rights of citizenship, which had been fruitlessly urged in 1784, during the exertions for amending the parliamentary representation, and deriving instruction from the defeat of that measure to which they were ardent friends, wished to array the members of that religion also in support of reform, by giving them an interest in its success. If it were combined with catholic emancipation, and that its other protestant advocates could be induced to forego their sectarial prejudices, the chance in favour of both objects would be infinitely increased by the union. Reform would be again raised from the neglect into which it had fallen since its rejection by parliament, and would derive additional consequence from a fresh reinforcement of po-

pular support. The catholics would count among their friends, those whose hostility had hitherto appeared to be the chief obstacle to their relief; and the two sects being engaged in pursuit of the same object, their former distrust and animosities would vanish before their common interest.

The first step towards the accomplishment of this plan, was naturally taken by the dissenters in the north, whose habit of public discussion, ardent love of liberty, and greater independence on government, emboldened them to begin. They felt also that, as their forefathers had been pre-eminently instrumental in oppressing the catholics, justice as well as policy, required them to make the earliest advances towards conciliation and union. Before that time, the violent prejudices, vaunted superiority, and repulsive arrogance of the protestants in general, had placed such a gulph of separation between the followers of the two religions, that the catholics the most enlightened and attached to liberty, despaired of effecting any thing in conjunction with their countrymen; and however reluctantly, were forced to purchase occasional mitigations of the penal code by dependency on the court and humble solicitations at the Castle. But it is unquestionable, that when that body saw itself likely to be supported by a considerable portion of the protestants, it manifested a perfect willingness to make common cause. The spirit of religious liberty having made great progress in the province of Ulster, it was intended at a public celebration of the French revolution, on the 14th July, 1791, at Belfast, the political capital of the north, to introduce a collateral resolution in favour of admitting the Catholics to the rights of citizenship; which was however withdrawn, from an apprehension that the minds of those present were not yet fully prepared for the measure. It was shortly afterwards received and adopted by the first Belfast volunteer company, a remnant of the old volunteers.

That resolution drew from the catholics of Elphin and Jamestown,

town, others, expressive of their thanks, which were forwarded to Belfast; and this at the time almost unheeded event, was the first foundation of an union which in its progress seemed destined to strike a tremendous blow against British connexion.

More energetic measures remained still to be adopted. Clubs were long used in Great Britain and Ireland for the accomplishment of political objects. At this very time, the parliamentary opposition, with its adherents, was associated under the name of the *Whig Club*; the most public spirited citizens of Dublin, had formed themselves into a society called the *Whigs of the Capital*; and other similar institutions existed in the country-parts of the kingdom, particularly at Belfast: all professing to revive the decaying principles of whiggism. To the French, however, is the world indebted for completely demonstrating the political efficacy of clubs; and the proof they were then giving pointed out the advantage of employing an instrument which promised so much benefit, and which seemed peculiarly calculated for overcoming those antipathies that opposed the progress of reform in Ireland. The Clubs already established seemed by the ancient principles of the party from which they were named, as well as by the prejudices of many of their members, rather to exclude religious toleration. In consequence, therefore, of an agreement between some popular characters in the North and some of the most enterprising Catholics of Dublin, together with a few members even of the established church, whom the progressive spirit of the times had liberalized, societies were to be instituted for uniting together the great objects of Parliamentary Reform and Catholic Emancipation.

Accordingly one was constituted in Belfast, in October, 1791; in the November following, another in Dublin; and shortly after many others throughout the North, all under the attractive title of UNITED IRISHMEN. In their declaration they stated, as their "heavy grievance," that they had "no national

"government, but were ruled by Englishmen and the servants "of Englishmen;" and, as its "effectual remedy," they pledged themselves "to endeavour by all due means, to procure a com-"plete and radical reform of the representation of the people "in parliament, including Irishmen of every religious persua-"sion."

The Press too, that most important engine in popular proceedings, it was determined to employ in this cause. There was, therefore, established by some of the most active and zealous in Belfast, a newspaper, called the *Northern Star*, which began with the commencement of 1792, and during the whole of its existence was undeviatingly devoted to the principles and views of the United Irishmen. A pamphlet written in the preceding September, by *Theobald Wolfe Tone*, under the signature of a *Northern Whig*, was likewise made extremely conducive to the same purpose. Its scope was to shew to the protestant friends of reform that they could never hope for success, unless by embodying with their measure a repeal of the popery laws, and thus giving to the mass of population an interest in its favour. The eloquent and forcible developement of this principle though proceeding from an unknown, and at that time, perfectly unconnected individual, did not fail to excite the attention and approbation of those, who were occupied in endeavouring to give it effect. They bestowed on the author their most confidential friendship, and employed his work as a powerful instrument for spreading their opinions. Ten thousand copies of it were struck off in Belfast, and circulated with unceasing industry and perseverance throughout the province of Ulster, while a cheap edition of it was selling in Dublin; and its effects were proportioned to the abilities of the writer.

Such were the measures adopted by a few men, of inconsiderable rank, and of no peculiar importance in society, to subvert the exclusive principles, both constitutional and religious, which had

had for ages characterised the Irish government; and, when the difficulties they encountered are considered, it is almost astonishing that the success of their exertions should ever have entitled them to the historian's notice. In the first place, they had to surmount the prejudices and suspicions of different sects, which length of time and tradition had almost interwoven with their respective creeds. This they hoped to accomplish, and they succeeded to a great degree, by bringing catholics and protestants together into societies and familiar intercourse, that mutual knowledge might remove mutual distrust; but the hatred of the lowest orders of catholics and dissenters, was, in many places, still violent and inveterate; so that, notwithstanding the utmost efforts of the United Irishmen, it was sometimes subsequently fanned into actual hostilities.

In addition to this original difficulty, they were counteracted by the members of the church establishment, who with very few exceptions, were alarmed at the new combination of parties, and endeavoured to dissolve it with a zeal proportioned to their fears. Besides, even those presbyterian men of property, who had obtained reputation by co-operating with Lord Charlemont, and the whig interest, cried out against and opposed the visionary wildness of obscure men, who were outstripping them in the career of politics, and rendering insignificant the exertions by which *they* hoped to have signalised their names. Thus abandoned by the rich and the respected, and not yet supported by the poor and despised parts of the community, the societies of United Irishmen were left exposed to the attacks of government and its adherents from every quarter. The insignificance of their individual members was derided, the sincerity of their principles and professions was denied, and they were charged with harbouring concealed designs of republicanism and separation from England. This assertion was subsequently made against them by high authority, and a letter quoted in proof from *Tone* (the original planner of these societies)

ties) to one of his friends, in which he declared himself a decided enemy to British connexion. Whether that enmity be deserving of censure or panegyric, it was unquestionably felt by him and by many others; but no design of interfering with the connexion, was entertained by the bodies at large; nor can it be justly ascribed to them, at that time, whatever changes may have been since produced by the progress of principles, which have swept away all veneration for antient establishments, merely as such, and substituted in its stead new feelings and opinions.

While these things were going on, the catholics were likewise soliciting, by their accustomed organ, a relaxation of the penal code. About twenty years before, a committee for conducting their affairs had been instituted with the knowledge and tacit sanction of government: It consisted of lords and gentlemen of rank and fortune, who sat in their own right, and of delegates from towns and cities. As their business was little more than presenting addresses of congratulation and loyalty to every newly arrived viceroy, and endeavouring, by humbly suing to his secretary, with occasional petitions to parliament, to procure some mitigation of the popery laws, the constitution of the committee was found fully adequate to all its purposes. Auguring favorably from the progressive liberality of the times, this body, in the latter end of 1790, prepared a petition to parliament, presuming to ask for nothing specific; but merely praying, that the case of the catholics might be taken into consideration.—Major Hobart, the Lord Lieutenant's secretary, was waited on with this petition, to implore the countenance and protection of government; but, liberal as were the times, government deemed this a season for resisting innovation of every kind, and its protection was refused. The committee were however inclined to persevere; but such was the Irish parliament, that they could not prevail on any one member of that body to bring in their petition!

Another

Another circumstance, too, strongly marked the determination of government respecting them. In the summer of 1790, Lord Westmoreland, then Lord Lieutenant, visited the south of Ireland. On his arrival at Cork, it was intimated to the catholics there, that an expression of their loyalty would be acceptable. Accordingly an address of that nature was prepared, which, however, concluded with a hope, that their loyalty would entitle them to some relaxation of the present code.—Before its being formally presented, it was submitted to his excellency, and was returned to them, to strike out the clause which expressed the hope. With a feeling rather natural to men not perfectly broken down by oppression, they refused to strike it out, and declined presenting any address at all.

In the beginning of 1791, the catholic committee were again disposed to urge their suit. They deputed twelve of their body to go to the castle with a list of those laws, and entreat the protection of government to remove any part of them it thought fit; but more forcibly to mark disapprobation, delegates, who were soliciting on behalf of three millions of people, were dismissed without the civility of an answer!

The patience of the committee was not yet exhausted.—They had been repulsed by the Irish Government; but, perhaps, without the concurrence of its English superiors. Mr. Keogh was, therefore, delegated to London, to make a similar application at the fountain head.——After three months solicitation, he was informed that no opposition would occur from England to the Irish catholics being admitted to the profession of the law, to their serving on grand juries, to their being county magistrates and high sheriffs; and, that their admission to the elective franchise should be taken under consideration.

But, in the mean time, the Irish administration appears to have

have attempted defeating the catholic application, by working on some members of the committee, and to have hoped, at least, to draw from it some pledge that it would never connect itself with the United Irishmen. For this purpose, some of the country gentlemen who sat in right of their rank, and who were always the most prominent persons in every humble application at court, directed by its obvious wishes, perhaps by its secret suggestions, endeavoured to induce the committee to adopt the resolution of seeking no removal of the existing disabilities, but in such manner and extent as to the wisdom, liberality and benevolence of the legislature should seem expedient. This was resisted by others, as a real abandonment of their object, and, on a division in the general committee, in December 1791, this last opinion prevailed by a majority of ninety to seventeen. This success, and the account of the exertion that produced it, were received with enthusiasm in the North.—Coming from that part of the catholics which was thought the least likely to resist administration, it was considered as shaking off hereditary aristocracy, and as a convincing proof that the body at large was sincerely determined to coalesce with the protestant reformers. It, therefore, gave a deep root to the Union there, in Dublin, and elsewhere.

These proceedings deserve also to be particularly noticed, as having given birth to the first general discussion of politics by the Irish Catholics in their distinct capacity. The landed gentlemen, who had so long assumed to be the head of that body, could not be easily brought to feel their weakness, or surrender their situation. After having gained a reinforcement by very diligent exertion, of fifty-one other names, Lords Fingal, Gormanston and Kenmare, with the rest of the sixty-eight, published to the world the resolutions that had been negatived in the committee. It has been alledged in their excuse for this obsequious exertion, that it was procured by the promise of a more extensive relief than was solicited by the committee. Perhaps

haps they also presumed to hope, that the display of so much strength and importance would silence or confound their not much more numerous opponents. It however produced counter resolutions from the Catholics of almost all the counties and principal towns in the kingdom, approving of the conduct of the committee, and censuring that of the sixty-eight. In the course of the meetings, where these counter resolutions were passed, the condition of the catholics was the subject of universal discussion; and thus the sense of their rights, and indignation at their wrongs, were exceedingly encreased.

On the other hand, the friends of what has since been called the Protestant Ascendancy had taken considerable alarm, and declared themselves against the Catholic claims and measures with the utmost violence and passion. As they were almost entirely members of the established church, in possession or expectation of all the exclusive benefits derived from their religion, and in general the uniform supporters of administration, they were either actually members of parliament, or at least more peculiarly connected with that body. This, therefore, will account for the proceedings of the session which commenced on the 19th of January, 1792.

1792.] On the first night of its meeting, Sir Hercules Langrishe (a confidential servant of government, but an early and decided enemy to the popery laws) gave notice in the House of Commons, of his intention to introduce a bill for the relief of the Catholics; which was accordingly brought in on the 4th of February. It opened to them the bar, up to the rank of king's counsel; permitted their intermarriage with protestants, provided it were celebrated by a protestant clergyman; but continued the disfranchisement of a protestant husband, marrying a popish wife; and subjected a catholic clergyman, celebrating such intermarriage, to the penalty of *death*; at the same time, declaring the marriage itself null and void. It fur-

ther gave the catholics the privilege of teaching school without licence from the ordinary, and permitted them to take two or more apprentices.

Whether this bill was intended as a reward for the fidelity of the sixty-eight, or a compliance with some order from the English cabinet, does not clearly appear; but it certainly was introduced without consulting the catholic committee. That body, however, in pursuance of its resolution, and of the decided wishes of those who declared in its favour, prepared a petition, which detailed at large the peculiar hardships of their situation. This Mr. O'Hara attempted to present on the 25th of January; but he quickly withdrew it, in consequence of some formal objections, and of the hostile temper of the house, very unequivocally manifested by the furious speeches of some members, and the heat and ferment that seemed to agitate the whole. Another petition was substituted a few days after, and presented on the 18th of February by Mr. Egan. This last was couched in language the most humble, and simply entreated the house to take into consideration, "Whether the removal of some of the "civil incapacities under which they laboured, and the restora- "tion of the petitioners to some share in the elective franchise, "which they enjoyed long after the revolution, would not tend "to strengthen the protestant state, add new vigour to in- "dustry, and afford protection and happiness to the catholics "of Ireland."

A petition was likewise presented by the inhabitants of Belfast in favour of the catholic claims. While the sufferers themselves were supplicating partial relief, in terms almost abject, their northern friends, little accustomed to temporise with the passions or prejudices of their opponents, boldly relied on the justice of the application, and asked for a complete repeal of all penal and restrictive laws against the catholics; so that they might be put on the same footing with their protestant fellow subjects.—

It

It has been already mentioned that a resolution expressing similar sentiments was withdrawn, lest it should be lost at the preceding celebration of the 14th of July in Belfast; but such had been the progress of liberality among the dissenters, that this unqualified application to parliament was accompanied by six hundred protestant signatures.

The House of Commons, however, was not actuated by the same spirit. These petitions were indeed received; but after some days they were taken off the table, on the motion of the Right Hon. David Latouche, and rejected by a very large majority; thereby cementing the already formidable union of sects, and binding the catholics and dissenters more closely together by a community of insult.

In the debate on this motion, Mr. Grattan reprobated the bigotry of the protestant ascendency, and predicted the final success of the catholics, by one of those sublime comparisons that peculiarly characterise his eloquence. "What, never be "free" exclaimed this overwhelming orator—"Three millions "of your people condemned by their fellow subjects to an ever-"lasting slavery, in all changes of time, decay of prejudice, en-"crease of knowledge, the fall of papal power, and the esta-"blishment of philosophic and moral ascendency in its place! "Never be free! Do you mean to tell the Roman Catholic, it "is in vain that you take oaths and declarations of allegiance; "it would be in vain even to renounce the spiritual power of "the Pope, and become like any other dissenter, it would make "no difference as to your emancipation: go to France: go to "America: carry your property, industry, manufactures, and "family, to a land of liberty. This is a sentence which requires "the power of a god and the malignity of a demon: you are "not competent to pronounce it. Believe me, you may as well "plant your foot on the earth, and hope by that resistance to "stop the diurnal revolution, which advances you to that morn-

" ing sun, which is to shine alike on the protestant and catho-
" lic, as you can hope to arrest the progress of that other
" light, reason and justice, which approach to liberate the ca-
" tholic and liberalise the protestant. Even now the question
" is on its way, and making its destined and irresistible progress,
" which you, with all your authority, will have no power to re-
" sist; no more than any other great truth, or any great ordi-
" nance of nature, or any law of motion, which mankind is free
" to contemplate, but cannot resist: there is a justice linked to
" their cause, and a truth that sets off their application."

Notwithstanding the adverse disposition of parliament, Sir Hercules Langrishe's bill was allowed to pass into a law; but in the debates to which it gave rise, the speakers on both sides of the question, even many of its supporters, who were likewise adherents of government, vented the most unmeasured abuse against the catholic committee, against those who defended it by resolutions and addresses, against the people of Belfast, and the societies of United Irishmen. Of these last, that of Dublin was attacked with peculiar severity, because it had made itself pre-eminently obnoxious, by several publications of various merits and importance. One of these, *The Digest of the Popery Laws*, prepared by the Hon. Simon Butler, an eminent lawyer, and the first chairman of the society, was admirably calculated to promote the cause for which it was written. By merely stripping the statutes of their preambles and recitals, and bringing the enacting clauses together in a simple arrangement, it presented, at one view, such a monstrous mass of tyranny and oppression, as shocked almost every reader.

Indeed, although this society appeared to be actuated by the purest principles of patriotism, it had so conducted itself, that it did not seem to have gained a single friend in either house of parliament. The Castle and its followers were such enemies as it must have counted on from its very origin; but their enmity

was

not more marked than the aversion of the opposition. This party had formed itself, as already stated, about the time of the regency dispute, into a whig club, and had hoped to collect the nation under its standard, by pledging itself to a bill for preventing placemen and pensioners from sitting in parliament, with others of a similar nature and equal importance. The members of opposition were by no means agreed as to the catholic claims or a parliamentary reform; although the able and eloquent Mr. Grattan, whose talents, exertions and public estimation had deservedly made him the head of the party, together with Mr. Curran, and some others, were avowed friends to both. In order, therefore, to preserve the appearance of co-operation and unanimity, the club remained intentionally silent on these two vital questions. Its prudence, however, did not increase its strength; for so entirely had the United Irishmen succeeded in drawing general attention to their own objects, that a place bill and a pension bill were considered as petty evasions of more important measures. The candidates for political situation who rested their pretensions on them were despised and derided, and those societies had not been instituted many months, before they destroyed the popularity and extinguished the power of the whig club. No wonder, then, that the members of opposition were not their parliamentary advocates, and were in some instances among their most inveterate abusers.

But the effects of the abuse thrown out against the Catholics and their committee were infinitely more important. The members of that religion had been charged with tenets inimical to good order and government; with harbouring pretensions to the forfeited estates of their forefathers; and with wishing to subvert the existing establishment that they might erect a popish one in its stead. These declarations were denied by a very full and unequivocal declaration from the committee; which was subsequently subscribed both by the clergy and laity. It also published the answers of foreign universities to queries proposed at

at the desire of Mr. Pitt, by the committee of English Catholics on the same religious opinions attributed to their communion; which, in all their answers are explicitly disavowed. The faculty of divinity at Louvain in particular expressed itself "struck with astonishment, that such questions should at the "end of this eighteenth century, be proposed to any learned "body, by inhabitants of a kingdom that glories in the talents "and discernment of its natives." These measures exceedingly comforted the timid protestants.

The majority of the committee had also been stigmatized in parliament as turbulent and seditious agitators, whose conduct should rather operate to prevent the relief granted to the good demeanour of the *Sixty-Eight*. The petition of the former was said to be only the act of an obscure faction, confined merely to the capital, disavowed by the great mass of the Catholics, ignorant of their sentiments, and incompetent to speak on their behalf.

If it was intended ever to proceed further, by any secondary body, in pursuit of emancipation, this objection of incompetency, could no longer be overlooked, urged as it had been with peculiar force, and well founded as it certainly appeared to be, were the organization only of the committee considered. The necessity of unequivocally shewing, that whatever future application might be made, was conformable to the wishes of the Catholics at large, and, perhaps, also, the desire of shaking off an hereditary aristocracy, which had become odious in consequence of the conduct of the *Sixty-Eight*, determined the committee to devise a plan, whereby the sentiments of every individual of that persuasion in Ireland should be ascertained. To this it was further impelled, by an assurance which was possibly given under an idea, that compliance with the requisite would be impracticable, and which is alluded to in the plan itself, in the following words: "We have the first authority for asserting, that this

"application

"application (a petition to the king) will have great weight "with our gracious sovereign and with parliament, if our friends "are qualified to declare that it is the universal wish of *every* "Catholic in the nation." The necessary unanimity was further promoted by a declaration from the leaders of the *Sixty-Eight* (repentant from the inadequacy of the relief granted to their good demeanour) that they would never again enter into any act to oppose the general committee, in its endeavours to obtain emancipation.

The plan itself proposed, that electors should be chosen by all the inhabitants of that religion in every parish, and that these electors should, in each county, choose its delegates to the committee. This manner of conducting the election was most satisfactory to the United Irishmen, who had now begun to maintain universal suffrage, as the only just mode of appointing representatives; and it removed from the dissenters all remaining apprehensions that the catholics might be unfit for liberty.

This project for re-organizing the general committee was at first very strongly opposed by the catholic bishops, who probably foresaw from its accomplishment the annihilation of their own influence in that assembly, as well as the displeasure it would afford to government. They strenuously insisted to their flocks, that the measure was not only impolitic, but illegal, and imminently dangerous to those who might attempt to carry it into effect. This charge of illegality, which was also made from other quarters, determined the committee to submit the plan itself to the opinion of two eminent lawyers, whose professional characters might remove all apprehension or doubt, while the independence and the liberality of their principles would guard against the injurious operation of corrupt influence or religious prejudice. For this purpose they chose the Hon. Simon Butler, and Beresford Burston, whose answers being entirely favourable, were printed, and universally dispersed throughout the country.

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From thenceforth no farther mention was expressly made of the illegality of the measure, and catholic opposition to it gradually died away.

The proceedings of the committee were seconded in the strongest manner by Belfast and its neighbourhood, at their commemoration meeting on the 14th of July. As volunteer associations had never been totally discontinued in Ulster, that day's immense assembly consisted not only of those, with the other inhabitants of the town and the vicinity, but also of a very considerable number of distant volunteer companies, together with a great concourse from a wide circuit of the north. The objects to be proposed to the meeting, having been the subject of a year's general and public discussion, were perfectly well understood by all before their assembling. These objects were to express a decided approbation of the French Revolution, with entire confidence in its success, and to adopt its principles as far as they were applicable to Ireland, through the means of catholic emancipation and parliamentary reform. A number of principal catholics and others from Dublin, attended this meeting by previous agreement, that they might themselves witness the spirit of the north. The resolutions and addresses were carried with acclamation, and the visitors returned satisfied as to the present and sanguine as to the future issue of the popular exertions.

But the agitation which the plan of the general committee produced throughout the kingdom, during the summer and autumn of 1792, was most extraordinary. Wherever their adversaries were sufficiently strong, corporate or county meetings were held to reprobate the plan, and to resist the exorbitant pretensions of the catholics; but if defeat, or even formidable resistance was dreaded, similar resolutions were entered into by the grand juries, where success could be easily secured from the mode of their appointment.

These resolutions breathed no common opposition. In general, they charged the committee with the intention of overawing the legislature; they drew a line of circumvallation round the protestant ascendancy, and pledged those who adopted them, as solemnly as could be done by words, to resist with their lives and fortunes every attempt to regain a right within its limits.—The corporation of Dublin went still further; for, alluding to the possibility of government's finally acceding to the catholic claims, it expressly says, that "the protestants of Ireland "would not be compelled, *by any authority whatever*, to aban- "don that political situation which their forefathers won with "their swords, and which is therefore their birthright:" and to this threatened resistance against the constituted authorities, it solemnly pledged the lives and fortunes of its members. That no doubt might be entertained as to the extent of what it was determined at all hazards to maintain, it gave a definition of protestant ascendency in these words: "A protestant king of Ire- "land, a protestant parliament, a protestant hierarchy, *protestant* "*electors and government*, the benches of justice, the army and "the revenue, through all their branches and details, protestant; "and this system supported by a connexion with the protestant "realm of England."

What gave to those resolutions a still more important appearance was, that they seemed to be made with the immediate sanction of government, inasmuch as the most confidential servants of the crown, and even its *ministers*, stepped forward to give them countenance and support in their respective counties. This authoritative interference on the part of persons high in the administration of the country (such as Mr. Foster, the Speaker of the House of Commons, in the county of Louth, and the Lord Chancellor in the county of Limerick) against a plan, calculated to ascertain an universal wish, formed a very striking and suspicious contrast with the assertion of the committee, that it had the *first authority* to declare an application would have

infinite weight, if it appeared to be the wish of every catholic in the nation.

The friends of emancipation were not on their parts much less active. The United Irishmen of Dublin and several catholic bodies, treated with indignation, argument, contempt, severity and ridicule, the pledges and menaces of the opposite party. Those in the capital particularly directed their attention to the circular letters issued by the corporation of that city, and in a pointed declaration denied its assertions and replied to its reasonings. The meeting convened for this purpose was remarkable, among other things, for affording to the catholics the first public opportunity of exerting their unknown, and almost despised talents. All the speeches on that occasion, but particularly the able, artful and argumentative declamation of Mr. Keogh; the classic and cultivated eloquence of Dr. Ryan, filled their ascendency opponents with mortification and surprise.

In order further to do away the effects of the grand jury resolutions, and to consider the situation of affairs, a great number of meetings of different towns and districts were likewise held throughout the province of Ulster during the winter of 1792. At all of them it was declared, that a radical reform in the representation of the people was the only remedy for the many existing grievances. Some few, with Londonderry at their head, expressed themselves as favourable to the *gradual* admission of the catholics into this basis of reform; but the great majority followed the example of Belfast, and declared for the immediate and unqualified extension of the right of suffrage to the whole catholic body.

These declarations, from different assemblies, having testified some slight disagreement on one of the great questions, it was proposed to call a convention of the province, as had twice before been done, and on one occasion with marked success.—

Dungannon,

Dungannon, the former place of meeting, and even the fifteenth of February, its anniversary, were deemed auspicious, and were therefore selected. It was also judged fit that the delegates should be appointed on the plan then pursuing by the catholics.

Their elections had been every where carried on, even during the heat of the grand jury and county resolutions, with tranquillity, and almost without observation. But the threatened hostilities of the protestant ascendency roused a martial spirit in its opponents. The ranks of the old volunteer corps were filling, and new ones springing up in every part of the North.—Vague and obscure notions, that the resistance of those who benefitted by the existing exclusions, together with the tide of political opinions now strongly setting in from France, would cause Ireland to be the theatre of revolution and the seat of war, seemed already to have possessed the minds of many; and the military dispositions and habits of the Irish were not such as to make them shrink from the struggle. Ever since the defection of the *Sixty-Eight*, the catholics had been kept in constant heat and agitation by political disputes and discussions. They first stepped forward to resist that aristocracy and support their committee: their attention was then more peculiarly turned inwards upon their disabilities, by those occurrences, and by the debates in parliament, while their affection was in no respect conciliated by the temper with which those debates were marked. The ensuing summer called forth all their reasoning faculties in their own defence, and excited all their animal feelings by insult, asperity, and menace. To them, therefore, the proceedings of the last year had been a continued study of the Rights of Man, and a gradual incitement to assert them. The dissenters, who never stood in need of much preliminary preparation, contemplated with enthusiasm the progress of the French revolution, and remembered their own fame in 1782. They saw indeed that their dearest objects, catholic emancipation and parliamen-

tary reform, were likely to be resisted, and conceded only to force: but so far from being terrified at the prospect, they rather began to speculate upon the ulterior consequences of the conflict. What those consequences might be, the eventful tenth of August and twenty-first of September, seemed to develope. The first of those days dethroned the King of France, and the last of them made that country a republic. But this extraordinary change was far from disagreeable to men who had been republicans in theory ever since the establishment of American independence; or whose minds were now rapidly advancing towards the same principles, almost without their consciousness.

Irish enthusiasm was likewise raised to its highest pitch, by the rapid and surprising victories with which the French, after their first disasters, had signalised the war. Nor was it overawed by the fear of opposition; for the military force in the country was small, and the gentry of more liberal sentiments, but who had kept aloof from fear or shame, were beginning to flock round the popular standard.

Such were the auspicious circumstances under which the catholic committee assembled on the 3d of December, 1792, and its meeting could not but afford some matter for speculation. The body which had previously held its meetings in Dublin, under the same name, and with the privity and consent of government, though of no alarming appearance, either from its numbers or importance; and though during almost the whole of its time, religious prejudices seemed at least dormant, did not think proper to make itself an object of any notoriety; so that even its existence was nearly unknown to the greater part of the protestant community. Now, however, notwithstanding that civil war had been denounced by the ascendency, and the menace *countenanced at least* by men very high in the government of the country, or enjoying very lucrative places in the administration, this committee assembled with the utmost publicity:

publicity: and so imposing was its appearance from numbers and respectability, that its original title was soon merged in the more expressive appellation of THE CATHOLIC CONVENTION. To what was this change attributable? To the consciousness of strength which its constituents had acquired, by being repeatedly involved in political discussions; to the increasing liberality and firmness of the protestants who espoused their cause; but most peculiarly to the unequivocal and energetic support they derived from their former enemies, the Northern Dissenters, by many strong and explicit declarations, together with corresponding military preparations.

The most active northerns, who had the year before procured a petition from Belfast to parliament for a complete repeal of the whole popery code, now pressed upon those of the committee with whom they were in habits of communication, that it also should make the same extensive claim. If there had been any difference of opinion, the effectual co-operation which they had always given, would have added infinite weight to their advice. But in truth, the committee from the very outset seemed perfectly disposed to assert all the rights infringed on by those laws.

It replied in a very dignified stile to the different corporation, county, and grand jury resolutions, by its vindication. Well knowing the authoritative influence which a royal recommendation would have on both legislative houses, it prepared a petition to the king, setting forth all the disabilities of the catholics; praying that he would recommend to his parliament of Ireland to take into consideration the whole of their situation; and expressing their wish to be restored to the rights and privileges of the constitution of their country.

The next question was, how this petition should be forwarded to England. Some were for transmitting it, in the ordinary mode,

mode, through the viceroy; and this, government itself seemed very solicitous to procure. The measure was expressly solicited by Lord Donoughmore, who, with his family, had always espoused the catholic cause; and who was likewise among the most steady supporters of administration. He waited outside the Hall where the committee met, to know their determination: he was informed by order of the meeting, that if the Lord Lieutenant would promise to forward the petition, with a recommendation in its favour, it should be intrusted to him.—Lord Donoughmore having carried this communication to the castle, and returned with an answer that his excellency could not in his official situation, pledge himself to the required recommendation; a remembrance of the hostile denunciations during the preceding summer—a suspicion of the manner in which they were excited, prevailed; and it was determined that the petition should be presented to the king himself, by deputies of the committee's own appointment. These were Messrs. Edward Byrne, John Keogh, James Edward Devereux, Christopher Bellew, and Sir Thomas French, Bart. They were accompanied by Mr. Tone, who, though a protestant, had in consequence of his very uncommon talents and exertions in the catholic cause, been appointed one of the secretaries to the committee, and the secretary to the delegation.

This committee was also remarkable for having as one of its members, a protestant and officer in the king's service, Major Edward Sweetman, returned by the county of Wexford, a place since accused of having manifested a spirit of bigotry and intolerance. The representative which it chose proved himself, however, every way worthy of the trust, by his firmness, liberality and splendid talents.

The delegates on their way through the North, were received at Belfast with the most marked affection. Their horses were taken from their carriages, and they were drawn through the streets

streets by a presbyterian populace, who wished to mark the sincerity with which they embraced the catholic cause.

The volunteer corps were at this time continuing to encrease and extend rapidly through the North. In Belfast, particularly, a very numerous town-meeting was held and attended by even the most moderate and opulent inhabitants. Resolutions were there passed, urging in the strongest manner a complete re-establishment of the volunteer institution, and determining to form a military fund.

While these things were going on, government seemed to be feeling its way, and hesitating whether it should concede or resist. Its measures accordingly often appeared experimental, embarrassed, and when compared together, the result of contradictory sentiments.

A new military association was forming in Dublin, called the First National Battalion, which unequivocally avowed republican principles, by its emblematic device, a harp without a crown, surmounted by a cap of liberty. As republicanism had not then stricken deep root in the capital, this very avowal served exceedingly to discredit the corps and to prevent its increase. In consequence therefore of a proclamation which appeared the 8th of December, and was well known to be directed against that body, under the vague description of seditious associations, it was never able to parade in public, because it was conscious of wanting public support. The proclamation not being generally supposed to allude to the old volunteers, they however still continued to assemble. At a meeeing of some of the Dublin corps on the 15th of December, thanks voted were to the United Irishmen of that city, for their address of the night before to the volunteers, calling upon them to resume their arms, stating the necessity of a reform in Parliament, pointing out the advantages that would accrue from a convention's meeting for that purpose, and suggesting

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ing the propriety of calling provincial assemblies preparatory to the national meeting. As this address became a subject of criminal prosecution, the resolution of thanks gave great offence to government.

A publication having appeared in the Northern Star which was deemed libellous, an officer was sent down to arrest the printer and proprietors of that paper, then nineteen in number, and consisting of some of the most popular characters in the town. When the officer arrived there and saw the disposition of its inhabitants, he began to doubt the propriety of executing his warrant, and communicated his opinion to some of the friends of government on the spot, whose apprehensions rather corresponded with his own. In this state of indecision he remained for many days, waiting ulterior orders; when the nature of his commission having transpired, the proprietors informed the sovereign of the town that if the warrant was legal they would surrender themselves; but if it were otherwise they would forcibly resist its execution. He directly brought them the warrant to satisfy them of its legality, and they submitted to a voluntary arrest. On their arrival in Dublin, as if no opportunity were to be lost of marking the union of sects, they were attended to the chief justice's house by a numerous retinue of catholic gentlemen of the first importance, and every bail bond was jointly executed by a member of that religion and by a protestant.

1793.] The catholic delegates having presented their petition at St. James's on the 2d January, the Lord Lieutenant in his speech from the throne on the 10th, communicated a particular recommendation from his Majesty to take into serious consideration the situation of his catholic subjects, and relying on the wisdom and liberality of his parliament. This recommendation seemed to work a rapid change of sentiment in many of those who had before brought forward the counties and grand juries to pledge their lives and fortunes against any further

further restoration of rights to their fellow subjects. In general it was received with a chastened and meek submission; but those who had most signalized themselves by their effusions of protestant zeal, could not so easily subject themselves to the charge of tergiversation. The lord Chancellor and Dr. Duigenan, as if speaking by concert, each in the house of which he was a member, in the debate on the address, accused the catholics of having deceived the king by a tissue of the grossest falsehoods and misrepresentations in their petition, and pledged themselves to prove this assertion at the proper period. The chancellor in particular said there were no such legal disabilities as stated in the petition; the laws relating to them having expired or been repealed. These assertions by the highest judicial character in the country, were very unceremoniously contradicted by the catholic sub-committee, which was appointed to act during the adjournment of the general committee. In two days after the assertion was made, they published a second edition of their petition with notes specifying the different statutes, sections and clauses, on which the alledged falsehoods and misrepresentations were grounded, and this they caused to be distributed to every member of either house of parliament. His lordship never thought fit to confute their falsehoods or correct their misrepresentations.

Four days after the opening of parliament, the house of commons, on the motion of Mr. Grattan, amended by Mr. Corry, (a supporter of administration) unanimously agreed to a committee for enquiring into the state of the representation; and the staunchest courtiers appeared eager to promote the great work of parliamentary reform. The two objects of the United Irishmen seemed now on the point of being peaceably accomplished, and hope took possession of every mind.

Parliament having been understood to sanction the discussion of those two heretofore proscribed subjects, an aggregate meeting

of the citizens of Dublin was convened on the 24th of January to take them into consideration and instruct their representatives. In the resolutions adopted by this meeting the house of commons was said not to be freely chosen by the people: and that house, as then influenced by places of emolument and pensions, it was alledged, did not speak the sense of the people. These resolutions having appeared in the Hibernian Journal, the printer was ordered to attend at the bar of that house on the 29th of January, for a breach of privilege. When questioned as to his defence, he said the resolutions were sent to him authenticated under the signature of Henry Hutton, one of the high sheriffs of the city; and that the sheriff authorised him to say he had signed them, as chairman of the meeting, and was ready to avow the fact if called upon. After a long debate, the printer was ordered into custody, where he was kept for a few days and then discharged; but no notice was taken of the sheriff, who was attending, dressed in the insignia of his office, and ready to justify his conduct.

On the 27th of the same month, when the Goldsmith's corps of volunteers was marching to exercise, as it had been in the habit of doing every week, it was informed by a civil magistrate that its meeting was contrary to the proclamation of the 8th December, and that he had orders to disperse it, but would not call in the military except in case of refusal. Unprepared and surprised at this totally unexpected application of the proclamation, it declined committing the country.

This proclamation was taken into consideration by the house of commons on the 31st of that month, and it was there stated by Mr. Secretary Hobart, that the Goldsmith's company was dispersed, because it was one of those which had, on the antecedent 15th of December, thanked the United Irishmen; and also because it had sometime in the November before issued a summons entitled "Citizen Soldiers," and dated "last year, would

"to

"to God it were the last hour of slavery." Which summons, reciting that the delegates of the corps were to assemble to celebrate the retreat of the Duke of Brunswick, and the French victories in the low countries, called upon the members of that body to attend. An address of thanks was unanimously voted to the lord lieutenant for the proclamation; but Lord Edward Fitzgerald intending to oppose it, began thus: "I give my "most hearty disapprobation to that address, for I do think "that the lord lieutenant and the majority of this house are the "worst subjects the king has." His words were instantly taken down, and he was ordered to the bar. On his explaining, it was unanimously resolved that his excuse was unsatisfactory and insufficient. The next day, however, an apology that was rumoured to be an aggravation of the insult, was received by a great majority.

The inhabitants of Belfast, finding that the king's speech had opened a prospect of success to their catholic brethren, again petitioned the house of commons in their favour. Such was the progress of liberality, that this petition was signed by almost two-thirds of the adult male population of the town.—But as if to manifest the utmost extent of contempt towards the house, which they alledged had insulted the petitions of the people, and then crouched to a recommendation from the throne, their present was an exact transcript of that which had been rejected the year before. No attempt was made, however, to repeat the indignity.

So far administration and its adherents seemed to fluctuate between concession and resistance. But on the 21st of January, Louis the 16th had suffered death, and his execution caused a great revulsion of public sentiment. On the 1st of February, war was declared between France and England, and the armies of the former were for months after, every where repulsed and driven within its territories. The affairs of that republic were

thought to be rapidly tumbling to ruin, by those who conceived the possibility and entertained the hopes of replacing a Bourbon on the throne. Perhaps these changes in the appearance of a revolution, the influence of which operated powerfully on Ireland, banished indecision from the councils of the castle. Perhaps, too, the hope occurred to men, who always regarded the union of sects in the combined pursuit of catholic emancipation and parliamentary reform, with hatred and dread, that by carefully keeping separate the two questions, an opportunity might arise of breaking the union, which rendered them irresistible; and that by conceding enough to meet the actual necessities of a considerable number of the catholics, such a temporary content might be produced among them, as would destroy their energy in co-operating with the other sect, and would facilitate the subduing of both in detail.

That government did not wish to do more than meet the actual necessities of such a number of the catholics, and destroy their co-operation with the dissenters, seems probable from the following circumstances. While some of the delegates from the committee were yet in London, the sub-committee, apprehending from private circumstances, that it was adviseable to make the extent of their wishes fully known to the Irish administration, deputed some of their body to wait on Major Hobart, and acquaint him, that the object and expectations of the catholics were the entire repeal of the popery laws. This declaration the secretary received with perfect politeness; but without implicating his responsibility by an indiscreet reply. Some days after, a second interview on the same subject having been judged necessary, the sub-committee feeling that it was called upon to be precise and specific, desired its deputies to read to Mr. Hobart, on its part, the same declaration reduced to writing. When this was accordingly done, Mr. Hobart addressed himself to Mr. Keogh, one of the deputation, and asked, did he not think that if government went for the elective franchise, and

and the repeal of the catholic laws relating to juries, with some minor circumstances then stated, enough would be done—Mr. Keogh replied, that as one of the deputation he could only answer, that it would not content the catholics, and that there he had no right to deliver any private opinion. "But it is your private opinion, I request to know?" rejoined the secretary.—"Why then," said Mr. Keogh, "if I was to give my private opinion I should say, they are substantial benefits." "It is not in government's power" directly answered the Minister, "to grant more." Some vague discourse was then carried on with others of the deputation, as if it was possible to negociate on the footing of partial emancipation. When the conversation (in substance at least, the same as the foregoing,) was reported to the sub-committee, it was exceedingly irritated, and hoping to retrieve what was past, instantly sent a new deputation, consisting of different members to reiterate the declaration in stronger terms; but the secretary had taken his ground.

Accordingly on the 7th of February he obtained leave to bring in a bill, for giving to the catholics the elective franchise; the right of being grand and petty jurors in all cases, of endowing a college and schools; of carrying arms if possessed of a certain property qualification, of holding subordinate civil offices, and of being justices of the peace; it also repealed all the remaining penal laws respecting personal property.

The progress of this bill through parliament was by no means rapid. It was violently opposed by the ascendency phalanx. They insisted that yielding to the catholic claims was incompatible with the constitution and connexion between the two countries, and a violation of the coronation oath. "They "have done this, replied Mr. Grattan, when a new enthusiasm "has gone forth in the place of religion, much more adverse to "kings than popery, and infinitely more prevailing—the spirit "of republicanism. At such a time they have chosen to make "the

"the catholics outcasts of a protestant monarchy, and leave "them no option but a republic; such a policy and such argu- "ments tend to make Irish catholics, French republicans."— "You are trustees," said he again, "to preserve to Great "Britain the physical force of the catholics of Ireland, and no- "thing but you can forfeit it—not religion—not the pope—not "the pretender—but your proscription, which argues that the "franchise of the catholic is incompatible with British con- "nexion, and of course teaches the catholic to argue that British "connexion is incompatible with catholic liberty."

In the house of peers, indeed, the opposition of the lord chancellor did not seem so violent and determined as at the first agitation of the question. This very striking change gave an air of credibility to certain rumours then in circulation. It was reported that his lordship had been reminded of his being the first native ever permitted to hold the Irish seals; and that the impropriety of departing from constant usage in his favour would become very manifest if he set himself at the head of any Irish party in opposition to what had been decided on by the English cabinet. The doctrine to which he owed his elevation was that the government of Ireland should be subordinate to that of England, and as such was the condition of his appointment, he must concur in the measures of those by whom it was conferred.

The bill, however, was not only opposed but procrastinated in its different stages, by circumstances that seemed scarcely accidental, and created frequent anxiety and suspense in those who were to profit by its success. While this uncertainty was hanging over their heads, and restraining their exertion for any other political object, parliament carefully separated the questions of reform and catholic emancipation, which the dissenters and reformers so ardently wished to unite; for it repaired the error it had fallen into through indecision, when it consented to the committee on the state of the representation. At the first

sitting

sitting of that committee on the 9th of February, Mr. Grattan proposed three resolutions, stating, "That the representation of the people is attended with great and heavy charges in consequence of the elections and returns of the members to serve in parliament, and that said abuses ought to be abolished."

"That of the three hundred members elected to serve in parliament, the counties and counties of cities and towns, together with the university, return eighty-four members, and that the remaining two hundred and sixteen are returned by boroughs and manors."

"That the state of the representation of the people in parliament requires amendment."

In the speech by which these resolutions were prefaced, he asserted, that of three hundred members, above two hundred were returned by individuals; from forty to fifty by ten persons; that several of the boroughs had no resident electors at all; some of them had but one; that on the whole, two-thirds of the representatives in the house of commons were returned by less than one hundred persons.

The resolutions were opposed by Sir John Parnell, the chancellor of the exchequer, who proposed instead of them, but in the form of an amendment, "That under the present system of representation the privileges of the people, the trade and prosperity of the country have greatly increased, and that if any plan be proposed likely to increase those advantages and not hazard what we already possess, it ought to be taken into the most serious consideration" After a long debate this resolution was carried by a repentant majority of an hundred and fifty-three to seventy-one.

Notwithstanding

Notwithstanding the inauspicious bodings which were caused by this division, the Ulster convention met at Dungannnon on the appointed 15th of February. When it was assembled, Antrim, Down, Londonderry, Tyrone, Donegal and Monaghan were found to be very fully represented—several districts in Armagh, Fermanagh and Cavan had totally failed to meet, or appoint any delegates. On the whole, however, it was considered a more complete representation of the province than either of the preceding meetings, because the delegates had been chosen directly by the whole people, which was not formerly the case.

In order to prevent any danger from the coming together of violent or factious men, the gentlemen of rank, property and moderate principles, were anxious to be chosen, and were very successful. This body after a sitting of two days came to a decision in favour of the absolute necessity of a radical reform, including the unqualified and immediate admission of the catholics. A resolution was also entered into, declaring in very pointed terms the protest of that province against the war with France, another was likewise passed expressing disapprobation of the militia establishment, as tending to supersede the volunteers.

For, among the strong measures which were proceeding at least *pari passu* with the catholic bill, was one for raising sixteen thousand militia in Ireland. An augmentation of five thousand men was also made to the ordinary establisment of twelve thousand regulars. Besides, obviously in order, by preventing the volunteers from being supplied with arms or ammunition, to strike at their existence, and to throw every practicable impediment in the way of the people's arming, a bill was passed to prevent the importation of arms and gunpowder into the kingdom, and the removing or keeping of arms or gunpowder without licence. Directly after the assent had been given to this bill the artillery belonging to the liberty corps in Dublin was seized, that of the merchants'

merchants' corps was taken by private agreement, and the lawyers with a public procession gave up theirs. The houses of gunsmiths and others in that city that were suspected as containing concealed arms were searched, and every manifestation given there, that the volunteers were to be no further tolerated than should be agreeable to administration. An alien bill was also enacted similar to that adopted in England.

These bills were agreed to in parliament, with so much readiness on all sides, that opposition could not be charged with clogging the wheels of government. Both parties concurred in the necessity of repressing faction and sedition; while the United Irishmen and their adherents thought that opposition forfeited all pretence to public confidence, by consenting to such measures, at least before any advance had been made to correct the acknowledged radical vice in the representation.

Sir Lawrence Parsons, indeed, pressed strongly that this reform should be included in the same bill, and incorporated with the restoration of the catholic franchise, which he imagined would secure both by uniting the nation in one common interest. "But sever these measures," said he, "and what is the conse-"quence? The minister will think that he has gratified so great "a part of the people by the catholic measure, that he may ven-"ture to controul the rest; and under this delusion he may "crush the reform. And what a multitude of mischiefs the re-"jection of the reform would produce, it is for you to consider "after the public expectation has been so much excited upon "it. Or if you say that the catholics having got franchise "would join in calling for reform, true; but what would the "minister think? that the catholics having obtained so much, "would abate much in their fervour. He would hope, after he "had drawn off by the catholic bill so great a portion of discon-"tent, that he might venture for a while to leave the rest to fer-

"ment, resolving however at his leisure to put a heavy curb on "your future exertions."

During this part of the session, another subject occupied the serious attention of the upper house of parliament. Disturbances had broken out, and outrages were committed in the county of Louth, and the neighbouring counties of Meath, Cavan and Monaghan, by persons of the very lowest rank in life, associated under the name of defenders. This body had its origin in religious persecution, and was an almost inevitable consequence of the system, according to which Ulster had been colonized and settled, and Ireland ruled since the reformation. In that province English and Scotch planters had been established on the forfeited lands of the native catholics. These last were for the most part obliged to retire to the bogs and mountains; but even there they were not permitted to loose the remembrance of their forefathers, their power and opulence, in the tranquil enjoyment of security and content. The bogs and mountains afforded them no refuge against the acts of uniformity and supremacy or the accumulating oppressions of the popery laws. Nor were the wretched inhabitants exempted by their defenceless condition from the hatred, contempt and persecution of their privileged and arrogant neighbours. Hence arose a mutual, rancorous animosity between the new settlers and natives, or in other words between the protestants and catholics, transmitted from generation to generation, until at last it became more violent and intolerant than in any other part of Ireland.

The volunteers by the benign influence of their institution, had for the first time considerably abated this spirit, and by their successful activity, as military men in keeping the peace, had prevented its receiving fresh provocation by outrage or insult. But in proportion as that body declined or was discouraged, prejudices and hatred revived, especially in districts remote from the principal bresbyterian towns, where the growing liberality of the

the most enlightened dissenters could scarcely operate. These prejudices, which chiefly prevailing in the county of Armagh, extended, less or more, into the adjoining districts of the counties of Down and Tyrone, began to break out into something like open hostility, in the year 1791. About that period, several associations among the lower orders of the protestants, were formed under the appellation of *peep-o'-day-boys*, whose object was to scour the catholic districts about the break of day, and strip the inhabitants of fire-arms, alledging that they were warranted in so doing by the popery laws, which had indeed for a long period forbidden to the members of that communion, the use of arms, even for self-defence.

The catholics, thus exposed and attacked, entered into a counter association called *defenders*, which derived its name from the necessity of their situation, and its excuse from the difficulty, or as they stated, the impossibility of obtaining justice against the aggressors. This association, at first local and confined, as much as mutual hatred would allow, to actual self-defence, began in 1792 to spread through other parts of the kingdom, and not a little to connect itself with more general politics. To this it is said to have been impelled by a harsh, unfounded persecution, which some leading friends of government did not think it consistent with their characters to carry on in the county of Louth, and which seems to have prepared the way for subsequent disturbances elsewhere.

In proportion as this association extended itself into districts, where no protestants of inferior rank in life were to be found, and therefore no outrages like those committed by the *peep-o'-day-boys* to be apprehended, it gradually lost its characteristic of being a religious feud, and became in fact an association of the lowest order, particularly for procuring a redress of the grievances of the very lowest orders. Even in the counties where it originated, it ceased to be actuated by religious ani-

mosity before the end of 1792, in consequence of the exertions of the early United Irishmen (whose chief endeavours were always directed to reconcile the protestants and catholics,) together with the influence of some liberal-minded men of both persuasions, and still more from the publications peculiarly adapted to that purpose, which were incessantly circulated through the medium of the Northern Star: for by these means the hatred of sects was lulled, until a subsequent period, when it will appear to have been aroused by fresh aggressions.

The defenders, after their association had changed its type, were bound together by oaths, obviously drawn up by illiterate men, different in different places, but all promising secrecy, and specifying whatever grievance was, in each place, most felt and best understood. Tythes therefore were, in all of them, very prominent. The views of these men were in general far from distinct; although they had a national notion that "something ought to be done for Ireland:" but they were all perfectly convinced that whatever was to be done for themselves or their country could only be accomplished by force of arms. They therefore formed themselves, as far as their knowledge would permit, upon a military system, and in order to procure arms, used to assemble by night, to take them from the houses of those who they conceived would be eventually their enemies.

They seem to have been entirely without any connexion in the upper, or even middling ranks of life, except what has transpired relative to Mr. Napper Tandy. Observing the commotions that were taking place in the county of Louth and its vicinity, and guessing that they were not without some motive and object, he was desirous of penetrating into the secret. He contrived to communicate this wish to some of the defenders; and as his character was long known to them, they agreed to inform him if he would bind himself to secrecy. To this he consented, and met a party of them at Castlebellingham, where the oath of secrecy

was

was administered. This fact having been discovered by an informer, bills of indictment for felony were found against him with great privacy by the grand jury of the county of Louth, where it was hoped he would be easily entrapped, as he was on his way from Dublin, to stand his trial there for having published a libel. Information however of his new danger was given him before he reached Dundalk; he therefore absconded, and shortly after left the kingdom.

These disturbances also attracted the attention of the house of lords early in 1793, and a secret committee was appointed to enquire into their causes, to endeavour to discover their promoters, and to prevent their extension. This committee consisted very much of peers who were avowed enemies to the catholic bill, and had during the preceding summer committed themselves against the meeting of what they emphatically called "*the Popish congress.*"

The secret committee in the course of its proceedings, proposed questions, to which it required answers on oath, that might eventually have criminated the persons under examination. As a knowledge of this fact had been obtained by the United Irishmen of Dublin, some of whom had been thus interrogated, they alledged, that the researches of the committee were not confined to the professed purpose of its institution, but directed principally to the discovery of evidence, in support of prosecutions, previously commenced, and utterly unconnected with the cause of the tumults it was appointed to investigate. They therefore published a series of observations, calculated to shew that the committee had no such right. They distinguished the legislative from the judicial capacity of the house of lords; denied its right to administer an oath in its legislative capacity; asserted that as a court it was bound by those rules of justice which were obligatory on all other courts, both as to the limits of jurisdiction, and the mode of conducting enquiry; and further insisted

sisted, that these rules deprived it of all right to administer an oath, or exact an answer, in similar cases, or to delegate its judicial authority to a committee.

For this publication, the chairman and secretary of the society, the honourable Simon Butler and Mr. Oliver Bond, with whose names it was signed, were brought before the house itself on the first of March. They both avowed the publication, and were in consequence sentenced by that assembly to six months imprisonment, and a fine was imposed on each of £500. The society was not however deterred from espousing their cause. They were sumptuously entertained, as if in defiance of parliament, during the whole of that time, and their fines paid by the voluntary subscriptions of the United Irishmen.

Well calculated, as was the sentence passed on these gentlemen, to prevent others from disputing the authority of the committee, yet it did not entirely succeed. Doctor Reynolds, a physician from the north, having been summoned before their lordships, professed his conviction of the truth of the observations published by the United Irishmen, and refused to be examined on oath. He was therefore committed, and detained a prisoner for near five months, till the expiration of the session; during all which time he experienced the same attentions as were shewn to Butler and Bond.

While the report of the secret committee was preparing, lively alarms were excited, and rumours very current through the metropolis, that it would implicate many leading members of the catholic convention, even to capital punishment—cover the whole of that body with suspicion and odium; and hazard if not defeat their bill, which was still only in progress. On the day when the report was expected, it was not made; a noble lord however sent a confidential and mutual friend to Mr. Sweetman, the secretary of the sub-committee, to inform him, that should

should it appear his life would be exceedingly endangered, and the bill itself run a great risk; but that if he would sign any kind of paper in the form and wording most agreeable to his own feelings, acknowledging his indiscretion, and expressing his regret, at having connected himself with the defenders, his lordship was authorised to say, the report should never see the light, and all difficulties respecting the pending law should be removed. This, Mr. Sweetman peremptorily refused, but offered, in consequence of the subsequent conversation, to call together the sub-committee, that it might receive any proposal his lordship should think fit to make to them. Accordingly in the course of an hour they were collected in one room, while his lordship occupied that adjoining. He then offered to them by means of his friend, the same benefits if they would disavow their secretary. This they also refused: The report appeared the next day.

Its object was to connect the defenders with all that was obnoxious to the administration; and principally to implicate the general committee, or at least the sub-committee of the catholics. This it attempted to do, by inference, from the secresy and regularity of the defender system, which it said seemed as if directed by men of superior rank; from the collecting of money to a considerable amount by the voluntary subscription of catholics, in consequence of a circular letter from the sub-committee, expressing the necessity of raising a fund for defraying the heavy and growing expences incurred by the general committee, in conducting the affairs of their constituents; and lastly, from some letters written by Mr. Sweetman to a gentleman at Dundalk, in which the report states, that the secretary, in the name of the sub-committee, directed enquiries to be made, touching the offences of which the defenders then in confinement were accused. One of these letters is given, dated 9th of August, 1792, which mentions, that the brother of a person whom the secret committee states to have been committed as a defender,

defender, left town truly disconsolate at not being able to effect something towards the liberation of his kinsman. This chain of circumstantial evidence was strengthened by the assertion, that Mr. Sweetman's correspondent had employed, at a considerable expence, an agent and counsel to act for several persons accused as defenders. The report seeming to presume, that the money used for that purpose was supplied by the catholic committee, and part of the voluntary subscription it had collected, has the candour to state, that nothing appeared before the secret committee which could lead it to believe that the body of the catholics were concerned in promoting these disturbances, or privy to this application of their money. The secret committee then couples (but only by the insinuation which results from juxtaposition in their report) the defenders with the volunteers, the reformers and republicans in the North and in Dublin.

This attack on the organ and adherents of the catholics having been generally conceived as aimed in hostility against the bill then depending for their relief, no time was lost in counteracting its effects. A reply to it appeared almost directly from the sub-committee, and another from the secretary. The defence by the former stated, that while the religious quarrels were going on between the *peep-o'-day-boys* and the defenders, in consequence of personal application from several protestant gentlemen, three of the committee had an interview in July, 1792, at Rathfryland, in the county of Down, with above twenty respectable protestant gentlemen of that neighbourhood, who admitted, that in no one instance had the catholics been the aggressors; but on the contrary had been repeatedly attacked, even in the solemn offices of their religion and burial of their dead. At this interview it was further stated to have been agreed, that the committee should use all its influence with the lower orders of catholics, to induce them to desist from their meetings, and that the volunteers should adopt resolutions expressing their determination to protect every man equally, without

out distinction of party or religion. In order to effectuate this agreement, the general committee framed a circular address to that district, stating the agreement and the determination of the volunteers: "Entreating the lower orders of catholics to abstain from parade and meetings, and all other measures, that might tend to alarm their protestant brethren; pointing out the embarrassment that would necessarily be thrown in the way of the great catholic objects, by any thing of riot, tumult or disorder; promising to those who should observe the peaceable demeanour recommended by that address, all possible protection, as well by applications to government, as by supporting at the common expence, the cause of those who, if attacked in their houses, property or persons, should dutifully appeal to the law of the land for redress, where circumstances might not enable them to seek for that protection themselves; but that the general committee would in no case undertake the defence of any man who should assist in any riotous or disorderly meeting, or should not behave himself soberly, peaceably, and honestly." The defence further stated, that this address and the resolutions of the volunteers, restored peace and harmony to that part of the country, which had been harrassed for many years before. It likewise mentioned, that the person alluded to in Mr. Sweetman's letter was recommended by that gentleman's commercial correspondent, as coming within the description of those whom the committee had promised to support; which, on examining his brother, there was found cause to doubt, and on that account all advice and assistance were refused. The subcommittee then solemnly asserted, that this was the only instance of their ever having had any kind of communication with the defenders. As to the levying of money, it specified the different expences which had been incurred in pursuing the catholic claims, and the necessity of voluntary contributions for their discharge. It also denied, that any part of them was ever applied to any other purpose. Mr. Sweetman's refutation dwelt on the same topics, and entered into a minute detail of his communications

with his commercial correspondent, the gentleman alluded to in the report of the secret committee. Notwithstanding the alarms that had been excited previous to the publication of the report, no attempt was made to proceed against any of the sub-committee or its secretary.

But, about this time, a tumult of another nature occurred, which never became an object of parliamentary cognizance; which was stated but imperfectly, even in the Northern Star, from motives of not very unreasonable apprehension; and which perhaps from a similar cause was scarcely noticed in the Dublin prints. It deserves however to be rescued from oblivion, and assigned its proper place in history. For some days previous to the 15th of March, various movements of the military were made towards Belfast, which were supposed to indicate some extraordinary measure. A train of artillery, consisting of two mortars and two field pieces, was brought to Lisburn, within seven miles of that town; and the inhabitants were also warned from different quarters of some impending mischief. On the 15th, at about two o'clock, four troops of the 17th dragoons having arrived in the vicinity by different routes, galloped into the centre of the town from its two opposite extremities with their sabres drawn, as if in full charge. After this singular manner of entering into a place where profound tranquility prevailed, *where cavalry had never been quartered before, and where none was at that time expected*, they were billeted on the principal taverns.

The inhabitants had not in general risen from their dinners, when a most alarming tumult began to take place. The dragoons had issued out from their respective quarters with their sabres drawn, generally in parties of from ten to twenty under the orders of a sergeant or corporal. They proceeded to attack every person, of every age and sex, who happened to be in the streets, and wounded many very severely. They had provided themselves

themselves with two or three ladders, upon which they mounted to demolish obnoxious signs, among which was that of Dr. Franklin. This having been made of copper cost them much useless labour with their swords; and the delay it occasioned gave some little opportunity to the inhabitants to recover from their astonishment, and think on their situation. The soldiers proceeded *with a written list*, to attack the houses of several individuals who had been long known for their popular principles. They also broke such windows of milliners or haberdashers as contained in them any thing green.

This scene had lasted until quite dark, when the inhabitants having begun to assemble in groupes, and consult together, were preparing to fly to arms. The magistrates and the officers *then* interfered, and shortly put an end to the military outrage. It is worth notice, that during the whole of this transaction, the 55th regiment, at that time in garrison in Belfast, was drawn up under arms within the barracks; but did not interfere until the dragoons had retired, when they were ordered out to line the streets, and prevent any assemblage of the town's people. So ended the evening of the 15th.

The night was spent in anxious alarm, few of the inhabitants went to bed, lest the attack should be renewed. From what occurred next day, however, it is evident that the volunteers were not remiss during that time in making preparations for defence.

On the morning of the 16th the streets were almost deserted. The sovereign, Mr. Bristow, (who appears in this awful dilemma not to have forgotten the duty he owed to the community) called a meeting of the inhabitants by public notice at the different places of worship. This meeting was so numerously attended, that it was held in the open air. The sovereign informed the inhabitants of his having waited upon General White, who commanded in the district, but who had been out of

town the night before, and that the general expressed some regret at what had occurred, and was willing to concert measures for the future peace of the place. The meeting appointed a committee of twenty-one, including all the magistrates, to confer with him on this subject.

Meanwhile the dragoons were manifesting every determination to re-commence their proceedings, as soon as it should be dark: they were even observed marking the houses of the most obnoxious persons, that had escaped them the night before from their ignorance of the town, to which they were all utter strangers. It was evening before the committee could meet the general: even his sincerity was doubted, for one of the warnings of danger to the town which had been given, and was believed, consisted of an assurance, that he had some time before written to Government, expressing his apprehensions, that when he should be committed with Belfast, he should not be able to prevent his soldiers from plundering the town, as the inhabitants were rich, and had a great deal of plate in their houses. But if the general was sincere, the discipline of the troops was very questionable: no time was therefore to be lost; night was coming on. The volunteers to the number of about seven hundred, being all who had arms, repaired as privately as possible to two places of parade, both near the centre of the town. They had also placed a guard in every house where an attack was expected. Several of the neighbouring country corps had sent them assurances that they would march to the support of the inhabitants, on the first intimation of its being necessary. Thus prepared, and certain of reinforcements, they calmly waited the result of the conference between the committee and the general.

This was for some time prevented from taking place, by a demand on the part of General White to be admitted as a member of the committee, he having been shortly before appointed a magistrate

a magistrate of the county. His appointment was made pursuant to the system which administration had even then adopted, of associating into the commission of the peace many military officers, quartered in what it conceived to be unfriendly places. It did so without any regard to habitual residence, to local connexions, or fortune, and without any view to their interfering in the ordinary duties of the office; but merely to elude the ancient provisions of the law, requiring that the army, whenever called out to act, should be under the direction and controul of a civil officer. The general's claim was therefore peremptorily refused by the committee, who insisted that by magistrates were meant such as had some stability and property in the county, not ephemeral agents, constituted only because they were military men, for a time stationed in the district. In consequence of this delay, one division of the volunteers, apprehending that matters would come to extremities, moved from its parade, and took post in the exchange. This general White soon perceived, and sent his aid-de-camp, captain Bourne, to the sovereign, then presiding at the committee, to demand the keys of the market house in his majesty's name, as the volunteers had taken the strongest position in the town, and he insisted on having the second. Some of the committee, not apprised of the movement of the volunteers, said it was only a guard which was placed in the exchange. "I know it is not a guard," replied the aid-de-camp, "I have just examined it by order of Gen. "White, and the area is a grove of bayonets, I therefore de-"mand in the king's name the keys of the market-house." The sovereign answered that the market-house did not belong to him; that he was then in the midst of the magistrates and principal inhabitants of the town, and would be guided only by them; the keys were therefore withheld.

At length, at about seven o'clock, the committee and the general met. The general demanded that the volunteers should disperse, as a preliminary to the conference. This was refused by

by the committee, on the ground that these corps had assembled merely as a precautionary measure of defence, and that when they were satisfied as to the safety of persons and property, their members would immediately repair to their homes. The general complained that he was in an irksome situation, and knew not well what to do. He could not enter into terms which would appear as a compromise, or rather a capitulation on the part of his majesty's troops; but he would answer for the safety of the town and the discipline of the dragoons. To this it was replied, that if the outrage was merely a mutinous excess of the men, contrary to their orders, it was impossible for the general to answer that it would not again occur; his pressing such responsibility would rather confirm the suspicion that the violence had been sanctioned by authority, and that his absence the night before was not merely accidental: in short, that there was only one way of allaying all apprehensions, and that was to remove the dragoons. To this at length the general acceded, and a written agreement was entered into, wherein he pledged himself publicly and personally, for the safety of the inhabitants during the night, and that the troops should be removed next morning. To this agreement the sovereign signed his name as a witness, and upon its being communicated to the volunteers, they instantly dispersed. The dragoons were accordingly removed, and not afterwards replaced by any other corps. Whether that agreement was considered, what general White apprehended it would be, a "capitulation on the part of his majesty's troops," it is not easy to say; but he did not long continue in the command of that district.

That was the last effort of the volunteers; for shortly afterwards government expressly commanded that every assemblage of that body should be prevented by military force: and a review of some country corps at Doah, in the county of Antrim, having been previously fixed upon for some few days after, the army was marched out of Belfast, on the very morning of the review,

review, to meet and disperse them. But the volunteers having been fortunately apprized of these steps, were able to guard against the melancholy consequences that might have ensued, and entirely avoided assembling.

The catholic bill having at last found its way through the forms of parliament, and received the royal assent, the general committee again met on the 25th of April. After expressing its thankfulness to the king for his interposition on behalf of its constituents, and voted some substantial and honorable proofs of its gratitude to individuals who had laboured in the catholic cause, it directed its attention towards one of the most degrading and deleterious consequences of the lately repealed popery laws; and appointed a committee to consult, communicate and correspond upon the means of procuring an improved system of education for the catholic youth of Ireland. The general committee further signalised itself by marking, in its last moments, its attachment to the entirely unaccomplished object for which the protestant reformers were so anxious. It "most earnestly "exhorted the catholics of Ireland to co-operate with their "protestant brethren, in all legal and constitutional means to "carry into effect that great measure, recognised by the wis-"dom of parliament, and so essential to the freedom, happi-"ness and prosperity of Ireland, a reform of the representation "of the people in the commons house." Having done this, it dissolved itself: since, by the restoration of the elective franchise, the catholics of Ireland were enabled to speak individually the language of freemen, and that they no longer wished to be considered as a distinct body of his majesty's subjects—Glad as the government was at the quiet dissolution of this committee, it was deeply offended at their valedictory resolution.

Public attention however was now occupied by the distresses of traders and manufacturers, particularly in the cotton line, who were reduced to great embarrassments by the first consequences

quences of the war. Their warehouses were overstocked with goods, which they were unable to send to any market; they therefore became incompetent to answer the demands for which they were responsible, and the workmen were reduced to the greatest distress for want of employment. The immediate pressure of this calamity was wisely removed, and credit greatly restored by advances from government, to such persons as could deposit goods to a sufficient amount, or produce equivalent security. The sum of £200,000 was entrusted to the management of commissioners, who granted out of it, to the different claimants, such sums as they judged necessary.

The country was also distracted by risings in many places to resist the execution of the militia law. The people in almost every county opposed the ballotting, and sometimes ventured to resist the regular forces that were brought against them. In the county of Wexford particularly, the insurgents attempted to attack the chief town, in order to liberate some prisoners from the goal; and in the conflict, Major Vallotin, who commanded the army, was killed. By allowing, however, that enlisted men should be taken, and substitutes found; by making some provision for the families of those who were drawn by lot; but still more by the constant and vigilant interposition of military force, resistance to the measure was gradually subdued.

Another instance of opposition to government occurred, where it was scarcely expected; in the month of June, at the annual meeting of the Synod of Ulster; a body consisting of the whole dissenting clergy of the north, and the presbytery of Dublin, together with a lay delegate from each parish. Notwithstanding a recent addition to the *regium donum* supposed to be given to obtain their influence against the union of sects, this body in its address to the king, expressed its dislike of the war, and its satisfaction at the admission of catholics to the privileges of the constitution.

Far

Far from the same ungrateful nature, was an address with which the lord lieutenant was honoured by the bishops of the long oppressed and reluctantly enfranchised religion. Their effusion of thankfulness did not confine itself to mere panegyric on his administration: it virtually contradicted many of those charges which had been preferred by the laity of the same persuasion. It applauded that spirit of conciliation by which it is said his excellency's government was eminently characterised, and went, by implication, to sever the union of the sects. Its compliments were not very consistent with the further pursuits of freedom, and its candour was conspicuous in the approval of the manner by which defenderism had been suppressed, and in deploring that the majority concerned in that unhappy system of infatuation were of their religion. The indignation and astonishment which this address excited among the catholic laity, can be easily conceived. It seemed called for by no particular occasion. It was clandestinely conducted, and even remained a profound secret until after it had been some days delivered. It was a violation of solemn declarations which those very prelates had made from time to time, amounting to the fullest assurances that they would never take a step of a political nature, but in conjunction with the laity. It was also generally considered as an unprincipled coalition with those who exhausted every effort in resisting the claims of the catholics, and whose intolerance compelled that body to look upon them in no other light than that of enemies. But it was not without an object. The persons to whom the general committee entrusted the formation of a plan for the education of the youth of their religion, had made considerable progress. After several meetings in the early part of the summer, they had agreed to these general principles: that the plan, while it embraced the catholic youth, should not exclude those of any other persuasion; that it should depend on the people for its support, and be subject to the joint controul of the clergy and laity. They had, by correspondence with different parts of the kingdom, assured themselves that

there would be no deficiency of ample resources for carrying it into effect. They had also submitted their general principles to the prelates themselves, the majority of whom expressed the most decided approbation. They had even held meetings with those reverend persons upon the best mode of bringing those principles into action. At one of those meetings, Dr. Reily, the catholic primate, Dr. Troy, the arch-bishop of Dublin, and four others who were present, made very considerable offers of pecuniary aid, more than might have been expected from their limited incomes. Dr. Reily likewise proposed the sketch of a plan nearly as follows: that there should be a grammar school in each diocese, where the lower branches of education should be elementarily taught; that there should be four provincial academies, where such youths as were designed for the church, for other professions or literary pursuits, should be received from the diocesan schools instructed in the languages and sciences; lastly, that there should be one grand seminary, in which those who had passed through any of the provincial schools should be entered for the purpose of standing public examinations; such as were destined for the church, to receive the necessary testimonials for their ordination, and such as were otherwise disposed, to qualify themselves for degrees, in whatever college they should think fit, which might be authorised by law to confer those dignities.

This outline, with some other materials, had been referred to Dr. Ryan, Dr. M'Neven and Mr. Lyons, three gentlemen extremely well qualified for digesting a more detailed plan, and they were actually occupied on the subject. They hoped by its accomplishment to deserve, and probably to acquire to themselves and their fellow labourers, the gratitude of their countrymen and of posterity, for a wise and comprehensive system of education, which should not only benefit the catholic body, but also embrace the general civilization of Ireland; which, independent of its direct advantages, might by the force of emulation,

tion, awake the established institutions from their present torpor, and perhaps even excite the silent sister of the English universities, into something like literary exertion. But while they were indulging their enthusiastic expectations, there is strong reason to believe, that the catholic hierarchy had privately stated these proceedings to administration, and given it the option; either to permit the members of that religion to establish a popular system of education, which might not be conducted entirely to the satisfaction of the court, or to assist the prelates with its influence and resources to establish another, over which they having entire controul, could so manage, as to make it subservient to every purpose which government might wish to derive from such an institution. On these latter terms a bargain appears to have been concluded, in which the address to his excellency was to be part of the price for court protection. Certain it is, that after that address was presented, all co-operation and confidence between the prelates and the laity was destroyed, and the gentlemen who were preparing a popular plan, were assured they might desist from their labours, as an arrangement had been made for catholic education, which should be solely conducted by the bishops, under the auspices of government and the sanction of parliament.

The projected system of strong measures was now to be completed by the legislature. The report of the secret committee of the lords, asserted, with a strange confusion of expressions, that the existence of a *self-created, representative* body of any description of the king's subjects, "taking upon itself the government of them, and laying taxes or subscriptions," to be applied at the discretion of that representative body, or of persons deputed by them, was incompatible with the public safety and tranquility. The convention bill was therefore brought in and passed; but although it was professed to be calculated solely against such bodies as were described in the report, its title was to prevent the election or appointment of unlawful assemblies,

"under pretence of preparing or presenting public petitions, or other addresses to his majesty or the parliament." The bill enacted that all such assemblies should be unlawful; but it had the mercy to declare, that his majesty's subjects might still petition the king or parliament. A traitorous correspondence bill was likewise enacted, conformable to that in England. To preserve the same uniformity, and perhaps also as an equivalent for the sacrifices to which opposition had freely consented, a libel bill and place bill were permitted to pass.

On the 19th of July, Mr. George Ponsonby, in the name of his brother, presented a bill for the more equal representation of the people in parliament. The former gentleman, with his connexions, had ever since the regency dispute joined the opposition; and by their influence, as well as by his own abilities he had acquired as much consideration and importance as could be conferred by a party, which adhered neither to government nor the people. The outline of the plan proposed by this bill was, that three representatives should be appointed for each county, and for the cities of Dublin and Cork. With regard to other cities, boroughs, towns or manors, that persons residing within the distance of four miles every way from the centre of each, (within such variations as necessity might demand) should have a right to vote for its representatives, if possessed of a ten pound freehold: that no person admitted to the freedom of any corporation, should thereby acquire such a right, unless he were also seized within the city or town corporate, of a five pound freehold, upon which he or his family resided for a year before the election and admission; that this regulation should not extend to persons acquiring that freedom by birth, marriage, or service; and lastly, that an oath should be taken by every person returned to serve in parliament, that he had not purchased his seat.

This plan may perhaps not unjustly be considered as flowing from the principle of property qualification, adopted by a society which

which called itself *the friends of the constitution, liberty, and peace.* When the union of catholics and dissenters in pursuit of the same objects, had succeeded in raising the question of reform from the neglect into which it had fallen after the Convention of 1784; and that the force of public opinion was bearing powerfully upon that point, a number of noblemen and gentlemen of the first rank and fortune, with the duke of Leinster at their head, collecting around them as much as possible the friends of reform in parliament, in the whig club, and at the bar, formed themselves in the latter end of 1792, into a society under that name. It was expected by its respectability to overawe, and by its moderation to curb the much more democratic United Irishmen. When it had thus superseded, what its partizans termed faction and sedition, it intended to put itself at the head of the people. That its loyalty might be unquestioned, a disavowal of republican principles was made an integral part of its admission test. So long as the Irish ministers were balancing upon their line of conduct, they patronised, as much as was consistent with their characters, this check upon their most formidable opponents; by means of which silent approbation, and of the society's own landed connections, it was enabled to put out some offshoots in other parts of the kingdom. But when reform was to be seriously resisted, the friends of peace were not found forward to struggle against the storm, and the society expired of languor, while the United Irishmen were maintaining themselves against denunciations, prosecutions and imprisonments. These last in Dublin had also submitted to public consideration a plan of parliamentary reform, on the broad base of universal suffrage, for which they were become unequivocal advocates.

In truth, however, by this time, all prospect of accomplishing any thing on that subject, had every where disappeared.—The hope that had been excited by the unanimous consent of parliament to go into a committee, was disappointed by the rejection of Mr. Grattan's resolutions, and the adoption of Sir John

John Parnell's amendment; it was completely blasted by the successive adjournments, which defeated every attempt to render the committee's proceedings of any avail; and the presenting of Mr. Ponsonby's bill, was rather considered as the formal discharge of a promise long since made, than as a step towards success.

The expression too, of that spirit which called for reform, was greatly restrained by the coercive measures of government and parliament at home, and by the gloomy appearances abroad. France was agitated by the defections of its generals, the insurrections in the west, the contest between the mountain and the girondists, and the successful pressure of foreign armies. Even when that country again began to assume an offensive aspect, and determined on the motion of Barrere, to rise in mass, the enthusiasm by which it was actuated, failed of exciting correspondent demonstrations in Ireland; very much indeed from the effects of domestic terror, but in many cases unquestionably from a contemplation and horror of that beginning system in the French republic. The professions of atheism, and the open mockery of christianity, shocked a people that always cherished and respected religion. The carnage committed by the revolutionary tribunals, and the tyranny of the committee of public safety, deeply afflicted the lovers of liberty and justice. The assertions boldly made by the anti-reformists, and the adherents of government, that those outrages were essentially connected with the march of democracy, alarmed the timid, revolted those whose liberal politics were more the result of feeling than of reflection, and even co-operated with the measures of government, in compelling many of the philosophic reformers to wait in silence a more favourable opportunity, when what had been lost of public reason and public strength, should be again restored.

[1974.] In this state of active outcry on the one part, and temporary inaction on the other, parliament again met on the 21st of January, 1794. During this session, opposition

sition in almost every case melted itself down into the common mass of ministerial advocates. The address to his Majesty was unanimously voted without amendment, Mr. Grattan having only broken silence to state his determination to preserve the connexion with Great Britain, and to assist her in the war, even if it were more unsuccessful. He afterwards in the course of the session, introduced a motion relative to an equalization of duties between the two countries, but Mr. Secretary Douglas having moved the question of adjournment, he declined pressing his own motion, lest it should seem to imply a distraction of sentiment in the house. The alien and gunpowder bills were continued likewise without resistance or comment, and that precedent was afterwards constantly followed.

The only instance where opposition seemed to assume any thing of its former tone, was, in the debate upon Mr. Ponsonby's reform bill, on the 4th of March; but even then that party was particularly careful to mark its abhorrence of democracy, of French principles, and universal suffrage. Sir Lawrence Parsons, indeed, very strikingly pointed out what he called the imposture and mockery of the existing representation. "When "the Americans were deliberating," said he, "on their new "constitution, if any one had got up among them, and had "proposed such an institution as our present borough represen-"tation, and had said, there is a certain ruin in Virginia, let it "send two representatives, to be named by any twelve persons "Mr. Washington shall appoint; and there is a certain tree in "Pennsylvania; let it send two representatives, to be named by "any twelve persons Mr. Franklin shall appoint; and so on— "would not the man have been deemed mad who made such a "proposition. An institution, then, which any rational set of "men upon earth would deem a man mad for having proposed, "can it be sound sense in you to retain?"

Mr. Grattan too, among other arguments in support of the plan before the house, asserted that ninety, or, as he believed, about

about forty individuals, returned a vast majority in the house of commons. "Of property," said he, "it will be found that "those who return that majority (it is I believe two thirds) "have not an annual income of three hundred thousand pounds, "while they give and grant above three millions—that is, the "taxes they give are ten times, and the property they tax "is infinitely greater than the property they represent." But his speech was most particularly remarkable for a series of epigrammatic invectives against the United Irishmen of Dublin, their plan of reform, and the principle of universal suffrage.

To this display of what they stiled "the highest genius with the lowest ribaldry," they replied in an answer full of argument, and which cannot be refused at least the merit of temper and moderation; but in doing so they made their last public effort. Mr. Hamilton Rowan had been found guilty on the preceding 29th of January, of publishing a seditious libel, by distributing the address of that society to the volunteers of Ireland, and sentenced to two years imprisonment, and a fine of five hundred pounds. Government then felt itself emboldened, after the rejection of Mr. Ponsonby's bill, by a majority of one hundred and forty-two to forty-four, to disperse the only body under its immediate observation, that presumed to brave its power, and persevered in pursuing reform. This Mr. Sheriff Giffard accomplished by its order, and without resistance, in consequence of the general apparent apathy, and of a conviction on the minds of the members themselves, that there now remained no hope of acquiring the object for which they sought, by similar meetings, or by public discussions.

This society from its first formation, had been a mark for the abuse of government and its adherents. To the perseverance and exertions however of the United Irishmen of Dublin, may be attributed much of the change which took place in the public mind in favour of the catholic claims. Just before the existence of

of their society, the followers of that religion would not be permitted in an address of loyalty to the viceroy, to express a hope of relief: and not a member of parliament could be found even to present a petition to the legislature, praying that their case might be taken into consideration: yet the institution had not been eighteen months established, when in spite of denunciations of war from the protestant ascendency, and with only the ungracious and constrained assent of the Irish government, the popery laws, the disgrace and scourge of a century, were reduced to a few comparatively insignificant restraints.—A reform in parliament seemed at one time too on the point of being conceded to that spirit, which the same society had been very instrumental in exciting, and was always among the foremost to evince. Whether that spirit be characterised as patriotism and firmness, or as faction or sedition, if all the friends of reform had concurred in displaying as much of it as was shewn by the United Irishmen, and had marched *pari passu* with them, there can be no reasonable doubt but that their efforts would have been crowned with complete success. Thus might Ireland, under the vigilant protection and ameliorating cares of a free, regenerated legislature, have emerged from her debasement, poverty and wretchedness; have rapidly risen to importance and opulence, to prosperity and happiness; have escaped her subsequent calamities, her scenes of persecution, desolation, outrage and horror; have still continued a distinct and independent, as she would have been an admired and respected nation.

The present inaction on the part of the people, does not, however, seem to have deluded parliament into an opinion that coercion had produced conviction in the lower orders, or that the gun-powder and convention bills, with all their consequences, had removed a sense of grievance from the Irish mind. Colonel Blaquiere (as if he had the wildness to suppose that such a motion could be entertained in the assembly he addressed) proposed that every member should send for each of his tenants, who paid

under forty pounds a year, and refund him three shillings in the pound of his last September's rent. There was not a man among them, he said, who in case of commotion could find fifty followers on his estate, perfectly attached to the constitution.—He went on, and said the French were meditating something wicked; he inclined to believe it was Ireland they meant to visit—half the nation was attached to them—he would be right if he said more than half. This was reprehended with such an irritation on the part of the house, as sometimes betrays itself in those who are unexpectedly offended by the statement of an undeniable and unwelcome truth. Sir Lawrence Parsons urged administration to take measures for putting the country into a proper state of defence, by raising and officering independent companies. His importunity on this subject was almost deemed troublesome; but in pressing it on ministers, he told them he thought they were sleeping on a volcano.

And deep and terrible indeed was the volcano, which secret discontent was forming, and gradually extending throughout the land. The press had been overawed and subdued: numberless prosecutions had been commenced against almost every popular publication; but particularly against the Northern Star. The expectations of the reformers had been blasted, their plans had been defeated, and decisive means had been taken by government to prevent their being resumed. It became therefore necessary to wait for new events, from which might be formed new plans. Nor did such events seem distant; for now the French armies were again emblazoning their cause with success, and hiding, in the splendor of their victories, the atrocities of their government. This raised a returning hope, that the crimes and calamities of the moment might pass away from that republic, and the permanent consequences of its revolution still shed a happy influence on Ireland. The utterance of opinions favourable to reform and democracy, was prevented in the upper and middling ranks, by the coercion they experienced, and by the

the outcries that were raised against France, against her principles, and from them against liberty itself. But those restraints and reflections scarcely affected the lower orders, in themselves nineteen-twentieths of the population; whose proceedings were unobserved, whose reasonings were confined to their own misery, and whose views were entirely directed to its alleviation. The system of defenderism, therefore, continued to spread from Ulster into Connaught, Leinster and Munster, privately and uninterruptedly, although its progress was marked in those places by some appearances of assembling and disturbance.—The defenders likewise, began to entertain an idea, that possibly the French might visit Ireland, and that from thence, benefits would result to them and their country; for in some places, it was made a part of the oath, and in others well understood, that they should join the French in case of an invasion. There is not however, any reason to believe that this expectation arose from any communication with France; but only from the strength and ardency of their own wishes. They were also as yet unconnected with any persons of information or an higher order. But even these last were not induced by their defeats and disappointments, entirely to relinquish their political pursuits: on the contrary, some of them began to resolve on more important measures.

At an earlier period, when the Brissotines had declared war against England, they sent a confidential agent to Ireland, with offers of succour, if it would attempt to liberate and separate itself from their enemy. This gentleman arrived in Dublin sometime in the summer of 1793, with an introduction to Lord Edward Fitz-Gerald. His offers were made known to Messrs. Butler and Bond then in Newgate, to Mr. Rowan, Dr. Reynolds and some others; but those persons, then so obnoxious to government, discountenanced the proposal, and it was dropped. Now however, a similar application was differently received. When the committee of public safety came into

power, they employed the Reverend William Jackson, who had been for some years resident in France, to go to England and Ireland for the purpose, among other things, of getting accurate information of the state of each. In London, he contrived to obtain a paper descriptive of the state of England, which asserted, that all parties would unite to repel an invasion. He then determined to proceed to Dublin; but first made Mr. Cockayne (an attorney who had been his acquaintance for many years) privy to his mission. Mr. Cockayne directly communicated the intelligence to the English ministry, and was ordered to contrive that he might be Mr. Jackson's travelling companion, and a vigilant reporter of his proceedings. They accordingly set out together, about April 1794, for Dublin, when they accidentally met a gentlemen, who had known Mr. Cockayne in London, and of course invited him and his fellow-traveller to dinner. The company consisted of men whose principles were democratic, and the conversation was consequently of that cast. By means of an acquaintance which Mr. Jackson there formed with Mr. Lewines, and by some intimation of his not being an unimportant character, he contrived to be introduced to Mr. Hamilton Rowan, then in Newgate, and by him to Mr. Tone and Dr. Reynolds. To them he communicated the motives of his journey, and shewed them the paper he had procured in England. This caused Mr. Tone to draw up, for the purpose also of being sent to France, a succinct and forcible statement of what he conceived to be the actual situation of Ireland. He divided its population into religious and political classes, of each of which he pointed out the strength, interests, dispositions and grievances, together with the effect that would be produced on each by an invasion. "In a word," concluded he, "from "reason, reflection, interest, prejudice, the spirit of change, the "misery of the great bulk of the nation, and above all, the "hatred of the English name, resulting from the tyranny of "near seven centuries, there seems to be little doubt but an in-"vasion in sufficient force would be supported by the people.

There

"There is scarcely any army in the country, and the militia, "the bulk of whom are catholics, would to a moral certainty "refuse to act, if they saw such a force as they could look "to, for support."

Mr. Jackson was so pleased with this paper and its author, that he pressed him very strongly to go to France, and enforce in person its contents; promising him the utmost success, both as a public and private man. At first Mr. Tone agreed to this proposal; but afterwards declined it, on account of his wife and children. Mr. Rowan then suggested, that Dr. Reynolds should go on the same mission, which he was not unwilling to do, but was discountenanced by Jackson, who wished it to be undertaken by no other person but Tone, of whose consent he had not entirely despaired. While this was going on, government was minutely informed of every particular by the intervention of Cockayne; and having intercepted some of Jackson's letters, enough to form a body of evidence against him, he was arrested the latter end of April. Dr. Reynolds shortly after got privately to America. Mr. Rowan escaped from Newgate on the night of the first of May, and was conveyed on board a small vessel in Dublin harbour, that had been secured for him by a friend. A proclamation was directly issued by government, offering £1000 reward for his apprehension, and another by the corporation of Dublin, from whose gaol he had escaped, offering £500 for the same purpose. The sailors of the ship in which he was concealed, knowing whom they had on board, shewed him the two proclamations, to which he answered, "lads my life is in your hands," and made them fully acquainted with the cause of his danger and flight. They instantly assured him they never would betray, but would protect him to the last extremity. Accordingly, on the first change of wind, they put to sea, and landed him safely in France. Tone, on the other hand, made no attempt at concealment or escape. He was not at first ascertained that Cockayne was an informer, and even after

after he had reason to be otherwise convinced, he persuaded himself that no more could be proved against him, than misprision of treason, in concealing a solicitation to go to France, which he had rejected. In this opinion he was probably mistaken, but the point was never tried, owing to the interposition of private friendship. Mr. Marcus Beresford and others, whose government connections were of the first importance, interested themselves zealously and successfully, to screen him from prosecution. Attempts however were made to induce him, by threats and offers, to appear against his associates; but this he rejected with indignation. He communicated unequivocally to the servants of the crown, every thing he had done himself; but refused to disclose what might affect others; and added, that if he was left unmolested, it was his intention, as soon as he could settle his affairs, and receive payment of the £1500 that had been voted him by the catholic committee, to quit Ireland; that if, however, government chose to prevent his doing so, it might arrest him, and if he was put upon his trial, he would justify his political conduct. The influence of his friends, with perhaps his own firmness, prevailed, and he remained undisturbed.

The arrest of Jackson, and the publication of his designs, conveyed no unwelcome information to the body of the Irish people. From thence they derived the first authentic intelligence, that their situation was an object of attention to France, and that they might perhaps, at some future period, receive assistance from that quarter. These expectations were cherished with the more ardour, on account of the surprising victories of the republican armies in the summer of 1794, and not a little sweetened by the fall of Robespiere, and the consequent hope, that the reign of terror and cruelty was about to cease.

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In the sullen broodings also of secret discontent, republicanism, and the desire of separation from England, found powerful auxiliaries. Men, whose moderate principles and limited views had been bounded by reform, thought they read in the proscription of parliament, and the obstinacy of the borough proprietors, that reform was equally difficult of attainment as revolution; and that the connexion with England was the firmest bulwark of the abuses they sought to overthrow. From hence they inferred, that every thing must be hazarded before any thing could be gained. Some undoubtedly were driven by the force of this conclusion to rally round the ministerial standard; but the immense majority, even of simple reformers, were rather impelled by it to aim at more important objects. Nothing, not even a reform, they imagined could be accomplished without foreign succours; incompetent as they deemed themselves to cope with England and the aristocracy at home. No nation, however, could be expected to give effectual aid, unless the end proposed to it was, in point of interest, equivalent to the risk. A reform in the Irish parliament was not that equivalent to any foreign state; but the weakening of England, by destroying its connexion with Ireland, was of supreme importance, as they thought, to every maritime power. This train of reasoning was further strengthened in men of more democratic principles, by a conviction of the superior excellence of a republican government. Reform, and a republic, said they, are surrounded with equal difficulties, if only the internal strength of the Irish people be considered; but the most valuable of these objects is by much the most attainable, if reference be had to the chance of foreign assistance.

No steps, however, were at this time taking for action, or even for preparation; but all parties were speculating upon some change, in consequence of the French successes. There were persons indeed, who began to think, that after the experience of failure from the abandonment by leaders in 1784, and after, perhaps,

perhaps, a subsequent experience in 1793, the only sure plan would be, to make the mass of the people act: they never would betray themselves; nor be satisfied with any thing short of what their own wants required. Besides, as the remnants of religious animosity were still chiefly to be found in the lower orders, it was hoped that by bringing together those of that description, though of different sects, they might soon learn the identity of their views and interests, and as ardently love, as for centuries past they and their ancestors had feared, each other.

These ideas seemed to influence one of the three societies of United Irishmen, that had been formed in Belfast; which having escaped from observation by the obscurity of its members, had never entirely discontinued its sittings; and also another club of men, principally in the same sphere of life, some of whom had indeed been United Irishmen; but others never were. As there was scarcely a possibility of assembling in public, or of openly expressing their political sentiments, they wished to devise other means, and determined, as far as in their power, to influence the friends of liberty to come together again, and institute a system of secret associations: this they soon in part accomplished. Instead of the United Irish test, an oath mostly copied from it, was adopted; but the substance was so altered as to correspond with the progress of opinions. It did not like the test simply bind, to the use of abilities and influence in the attainment of an impartial and adequate representation of the Irish nation in parliament; but every member was sworn to "persevere in his endeavours to obtain an equal, full and adequate representation of all the people of Ireland:" thus leaving ample room for the efforts of republicanism. Secrecy and mutual confidence were also necessary, and the laws, which stood in the way of the pursuits and objects of these societies, were to be disarmed of their terrors. For this purpose, it was made part of the admission oath, that neither hopes nor fears, rewards nor punishments, should ever induce the person taking it, directly

rectly or indirectly, to inform or give evidence against any member of those societies, for any act or expression pursuant to the spirit of the obligation; thus stamping as a perjurer the man who should become an informer; attaching an additional sense of moral guilt to a dereliction of their cause, and destroying all regard of those recently made laws, which they said were enacted by a government it was criminal to support.

This plan was adopted, and the new test was taken by the two Belfast clubs; several others were also organised in that town and its vicinity, during the autumn and winter of 1794. As the name of United Irishmen was dear to the people, from the obloquies which had been cast upon them by the friends of government; and as it so well expressed their own intentions, the title of that body was adopted for the new associations; and this identity of name has generally led into an erroneous belief, that the new system was only a direct continuation of the old one.

It has been already hinted, and cannot be too forcibly impressed on the reflecting reader, that this institution, which from its very outset, looked towards a republican government, founded on the broadest principles of religious liberty and equal rights; that this institution, the consequences of which are yet to be read in the history of Ireland, was not the cabal of ambitious leaders, of artful intriguers, or speculative enthusiasts. Its first traces are to be found among mechanics, petty shop-keepers and farmers, who wanted a practical engine, by which the power and exertions of men like themselves, might be most effectually combined and employed: accordingly the scheme was calculated to embrace the lower orders, and in fact to make every man a politician. From the base of society, it gradually ascended first to the middling, and then to the more opulent ranks. Even in the very town where it had its origin, its existence was for a long time unknown to the generality of those who had previously

been the most prominent democratic characters; nor did they enter into the organization, until they saw how extensively it included those below them.

While this system was making its advances, silently but rapidly in the North, a change took place in the lieutenancy of Ireland. When Mr. Pitt thought it adviseable to dismember the English opposition, by detaching from it those whose opinions on the subject of the French war most nearly coincided with his own, the duke of Portland was prevailed upon to enter the cabinet, by such offers as can be best inferred from lord Fitzwilliam's letters to lord Carlisle, which have been published by the authority of the writer. These offers are sufficiently expressed in the following passages:—"When the duke of "Portland and his friends were to be *enticed* into a coalition with "Mr. Pitt's administration, it was necessary to hold out such "*lures*, as would make the coalition palatable. If the general "management and superintendance of Ireland had not been of- "fered to his grace, that coalition could never have taken place." The superintendance of that country having been vested in the duke, he seems to have been seriously intent on remedying some of the vices in its government. The system of that government, he said, was execrable; so execrable as to threaten not only Ireland with the greatest misfortune, but ultimately the empire. So strong was this opinion on his mind, that he seemed determined on going himself to reform those manifold abuses; if he could not find some one in whom he might have the most unbounded confidence, to undertake the arduous task. Such a person he found in lord Fitzwilliam, his second self—his nearest and dearest friend. That nobleman was far from desirous of undertaking the herculean office; but he was urgently pressed and persuaded by the duke of Portland. They both had connexions and political friends in Ireland, members of the opposition, whom they wished to consult on the future arrangements, and whose support lord Fitzwilliam conceived of indispensible

pensible importance, Mr. Grattan, Mr. Wm. Ponsonby, Mr. Denis Bowes Daly, and other members of that party, were therefore invited to London. They held frequent consultations with the duke of Portland and lord Fitzwilliam, at which Mr. Edmund Burke also occasionally assisted.

As they had, during the preceding session of parliament, even under the unpopular administration of lord Westmorland, expressed their approbation of the war, and assented to the strong measures of government, they were very ready to join with the duke of Portland in rallying under the standard of Mr. Pitt, provided certain domestic stipulations were acceded to, from which they hoped to secure some share of public confidence.—Among these were unqualified catholic emancipation, the dismissal of what was called the Beresford faction, with adequate regulations for preventing embezzlement, and for securing order and economy in the collection and administration of the treasury and revenue. Mr. Burke also suggested a further measure of liberality, flowing to the catholics from government itself.—They, he asserted, were far from being conciliated even by the partial repeal of the popery laws in 1793; in as much as administration, while it acceded to the law, shewed dislike to its relief, by avoiding as much as possible to act under its provisions;—although it rendered them admissible to certain offices, no appointment had been made, which realized to any individual the benefits it promised. He therefore advised that those places should, in some ascertained proportion, be conferred on catholics, so as to bind more closely the members of that communion to the state.

These consultations lasted for some months; and when the opposition leaders had determined upon their project, it was communicated to the British cabinet, as containing the terms upon which they were willing to take a share in the Irish government. Mr. Pitt wished and indeed tried to obtain, that some of

those measures should be at least delayed in the execution for a season; but Mr. Grattan and his friends insisted that they should be brought forward the very first session, in order to give eclat to the commencement of their administration. In the propriety of this demand the duke of Portland uniformly concurred, and even Mr. Pitt himself, who had previously kept in the back ground, and avoided personal communication with lord Fitzwilliam's friends, was present at some of the latter interviews, and certainly did not prevent its being believed, that he acquiesced in those demands, with which it was impossible to doubt his being acquainted. The members of opposition had no great experience of cabinets; they conceived, that they were entering into honourable engagements, in which every thing that was allowed to be understood, was equally binding with whatever was absolutely expressed, They rested satisfied that their stipulations were known and acceded to; they neglected to get them formally signed and ratified, or reduced to the shape of instructions from the British cabinet to the viceroy; they put them unsuspectingly in their pockets, and set off to become ministers in Ireland. Dr. Hussey too, an Irishman and a catholic ecclesiastic, who, it is said, had more than once been entrusted with important missions by English administrations, was sent over by the cabinet, to superintend and frame a plan for the education of the Irish clergy, in coincidence, it was supposed, with the other benefits intended for the members of that religion.

Mr. Grattan and his colleagues were scarcely arrived, when, finding that public expectation, particularly on the catholic question, had been awakened by the negociations in England, and by lord Fitzwilliam's appointment, they determined to begin without delay the system of conciliation, for which, as they conceived, they had received sufficient authority. It was therefore communicated so early as the 15th of December to some of the most active members of the late catholic committee, that lord Fitzwilliam had full powers to consent to the removal of all

all remaining disabilities; but that, as opposition to that measure was naturally to be expected from the protestant ascendency, it behoved the catholics to be active in their own cause, and to be prepared with petitions from all quarters. This intimation overcame a resolution formed by very many of that persuasion, that they would never again consent to meet as a distinct body. On the 23d, the former sub-committee, therefore, advised the catholics to petition in their different counties and districts, for the entire restoration of their rights.

[1795.] Lord Fitzwilliam arrived and assumed his office on the 5th of January, 1795. As experience had shewn how much reputation might be hazarded by ministerial coalitions, the friends of his excellency deemed it adviseable to counteract the suspicions which his and their novel connexions might inspire; they therefore let it be known, that he came to reverse the system of internal misrule, under which Ireland had been previously oppressed. To this assertion instant belief was given, when it was understood whom he had called to his councils, and whom he was inclined to repel from his presence. Mr. Grattan, Mr. Curran and the Ponsonby family were, of late, pledged to the utmost extent of catholic emancipation, and, to a certain measure at least, of parliamentary reform. An expectation of something beneficial was, therefore, entertained from an administration, in which they were to be conspicuous; but as the instability of political characters had been too often proved, more sanguine confidence was excited by the rumoured intention to disgrace and dismiss such men as lord Clare, Mr. Beresford, Messrs. Wolfe and Toler. The complete repeal of all the remaining popery laws was considered as essentially connected with this change, and some even ventured to hope for more important public benefits.

The appointment, therefore, of his excellency excited a lively interest, and gave universal satisfaction to those catholics, dissenters,

senters, and liberal members of the establishment, who as yet had not turned their eyes towards republicanism and separation from England; or having done so, had not fixed their views so steadily, as not to permit them to be diverted by minor considerations. The determined republicans, however, and members of the new organization, while they favoured the demonstrations of pleasure, because some internal, temporary alleviations might be gained, regarded the appointment as a mere change of ephemeral politics, which would serve to agitate the ambitious, and interest the unthinking; but the importance of which was soon to vanish before the mightier objects, that were rising to occupy the Irish mind. These men also deemed the administration itself eminently suspicious; because it designed as they alledged, by the popularity of partial measures, to turn public attention from more real grievances, and to excite if possible, a general approbation of the war with France.

Lord Fitzwilliam had scarcely assumed the reins of government, when he perceived the irresistible propriety of conceding all the rights, peculiarly withheld from the catholics. He was waited upon by a very numerous and respectable assemblage of that body, with an address expressive of their satisfaction at his excellency's appointment, and at his taking to his councils men, who enjoyed the confidence of the nation, and hoping that, under his administration, an end would be put to all religious distinctions. An interview of congratulation was likewise had with lord Milton, the lord lieutenant's secretary, in which he recommended the most peaceable demeanour and good conduct to all ranks; but mentioned, that whatever steps the catholics meant to pursue, he trusted they were such as would meet the approbation and support of the whole body. On the very third day after his excellency's arrival, he wrote to the British secretary of state, declaring his sentiments on the subject of their claims; and his expressions are remarkable, because they clearly shew, not only his own urgency, but also an apprehension that

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he might be thwarted in one of his favourite schemes, to the execution of which he seems conscious he had not gotten an unqualified or willing consent. *He trembled*, he said, about the catholic question; he stated, that he found it already in agitation, and concluded by giving his own opinion of the absolute necessity of the concession, as a matter not only wise, but essential to the public tranquillity. That letter went by the same mail as one of the preceding day, relative to the removal of Messrs. Wolfe and Toler, the attorney and solicitor-general.—The duke of Portland, however, in his reply of the 13th, made an ominous selection of topics; he omitted saying a word on the catholic question, but informed his excellency that his majesty consented to Mr. Wolfe's peerage. This letter was far from satisfactory: lord Fitzwilliam therefore, on the 15th, again urged the matter still more forcibly; he stated, that from the circumstances of the case, no time was to be lost, and added that if he received no *peremptory* instructions to the contrary, he would acquiesce. In that letter, he also mentioned the necessity of dismissing the Beresfords.

Before those peremptory instructions arrived, parliament met on the 22d of January. Mr. Grattan moved the address to his majesty, and his speech on that occasion developed enough of the new system of government, to confirm the suspicions of the republicans, and considerably to impair its popularity with the mass of the people. He declaimed against the French, with the utmost force of invective, and hurried by his zeal to hyperbole, almost to blasphemy, he said the objects at stake in the war, were the creature and his Creator, man and the Godhead; as if the Almighty were to be hurled from heaven, and deprived of his omnipotence, by the success of the French Republic.

In one respect, however, his speech was admirably calculated for its object. Supplies to an unprecedented amount were wanting;

wanting; and *they* are voted by parliament, not by the people: it therefore dwelt on the topics that were most likely, by agitating the passions, and exciting the fears of members of parliament, to open the purse-strings of the nation. "You know enough," said he, "of levels of Europe to foresee that that great ocean, "that inundation of barbarity, that desolation of infidelity, that "dissolution of government, and that sea of arms, if it swells "over the continent, must visit our coast;" and again speaking of Great Britain, "vulnerable in Flanders, vulnerable in Hol-"land, she is mortal here (in Ireland)—Here will be the engines "of war, the arsenal of the French artillery, the station of the "French navy, and through this wasted and disembowelled land, "will be poured the fiery contents of their artillery."

Mr. Duquery proposed an amendment to the address, imploring his majesty to take the earliest opportunity of concluding a peace with France, and not let the form of government in that country, be any impediment to that great and desirable object. This was negatived, and the address agreed to with only three dissenting voices.

On the 24th of January, no peremptory instructions having yet arrived, Mr. Grattan presented a petition from the catholics of Dublin, praying to be restored to a full enjoyment of the blessings of the constitution, by a repeal of all the penal and restrictive laws affecting the catholics of Ireland. Petitions couched in the same terms, now poured in from every part of the kingdom; no serious opposition to the measure was expected.—Parliament seemed at length ready to render justice with an unsparing hand; the protestants no where raised a murmur of dissatisfaction, and a petition in favour of this expected liberality, was once more presented by the indefatigable town of Belfast.

Meanwhile

Mean while, constant correspondences were going on between the governments of the two countries. Though Lord Fitzwilliam declared on the 15th of January, that he would acquiesce in complete catholic emancipation, unless he should receive peremptory instructions to the contrary, the subject was not even touched on, in either of the Duke of Portland's letters prior to the 2d of February: on that day, he received another, silent like those that preceded it, on that subject, and merely relating to the intended dismissal of Mr. Wolfe. Lord Milton, his excellency's secretary, also received one of the same date from Mr. Wyndham, mentioning Mr. Pitt's reluctance to the removal of Mr. Beresford, but nothing more. This last now appears to have grown into a subject of some importance; for on the 9th, Mr. Pitt himself wrote to Lord Fitzwilliam, expostulating on the intended dismissal of Mr. Beresford, but still silent on the less material catholic question: Mr. Pitt, however, concluded with an apology "for interrupting his lordships attention from the "many important considerations of a different nature, to which "all their minds ought to be directed."

The Duke of Portland, Lord Fitzwilliam's *nearest and dearest friend*, was the person appointed to break the unwelcome intelligence, that notwithstanding the length to which the Irish government was pledged to the catholics, its steps must be retraced. In a letter of an earlier date by a day than Mr. Pitt's, he brought that business "for the first time into play, as a ques-"tion of any doubt or difficulty with the British cabinet." "Then," says Lord Fitzwilliam, in his letter to Lord Carlisle, "it appears to have been discovered that the deferring it "would be not merely an expediency or thing to be desired for the present, but the means of doing a greater good to the Bri-"tish empire, than it has been capable of receiving since the "revolution, or at least *since the union*." His excellency in his reply to this unexpected communication, set forth the danger of retracting, and refused "to be the person to raise a flame, "which nothing but the force of arms could keep down."

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The business of parliament, however, was still proceeding, and the budget opened on the 9th of February. Before entering on the preparatory statements, Sir Lawrence Parsons rose, and after expressing the highest confidence in the noble lord at the head of the government of the country, and in the administration, who aided his councils, wished on the part of the people, to be explicitly informed whether gentlemen now in power were determined "to carry into effect those measures they so "repeatedly and ably proposed when in opposition—whether the repeal of the convention bill—whether the abolition "of sinecure places, which they had inveighed against—whether the disqualifiation of place-men from sitting in parliament, which they had branded with corruption—whether a "reform in parliament, which they had deemed indispensably "necessary, or an equalization of commercial benefits between both kingdoms, which they had insisted to be just, "were meant to be now carried into effect." To these questions, Mr. Grattan replied in general terms. "The honourable member has asked whether the same principles which "were formerly professed by certain gentlemen, with whom I "have the honour of acting, were to be the ruling principles at "present in his majesty's councils? To that I answer, they "certainly are." This answer not appearing sufficiently specific, Sir Lawrence again asked, "whether it was their determination to carry a repeal of the convention bill?—whether "they meant to carry the reform bill?" He further desired to know "whether the places that had been created for corrupt "purposes during the close of Lord Buckingham's government, "were to cease?—whether the trade between Great Britain and "Ireland was to continue on its old footing, or to be reduced to "a system of justice and perfect equality?" These were plain questions he said, which were easily answered. He professed himself willing to co-operate in supporting the war in the most vigorous manner; but while parliament called upon the purse of the nation, he thought it their duty to remunerate people by constitutional benefits. He did not press for particular informa-

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tion; his questions went only to general measures. On the subjects of them, the gentleman upon whom he called, had frequently gone so far as to produce bills, and in a quarter of an hour preparation might he made to bring them forward. It would be consolitory to the people to know, before the supplies were granted, that a redress of grievances was to follow. These gentlemen he had heard say of the convention bill, "that it "struck at the root of every free constitution in the world." If that were true, and that it were such an enormity, it ought not to be continued an infection in ours. He concluded with repeating his respect for, and confidence in administration. Mr. Grattan, after a considerable debate had taken place, during which he had ample time for reflecting within himself, and consulting his colleagues, answered those specific questions in these words. "To mention every particular bill is unusual—it "would be presumptious. Influence, however it may be pos-"sessed, ought never to be avowed by a minister in the face of "parliament. What has fallen from the honorable baronet, "however, induces me to say, and I am authorised to mention "for the gentlemen with whom I have the honour to act, that "the same principles which we professed while in opposition, "continue to govern our conduct now, and that we shall endea-"vour to the utmost of our power to give them effect." In a subsequent part of the debate, Mr. W. B. Ponsonby (who had introduced the reform bill the year before) said, "he held it "right to notice some expressions that had been thrown out in "the course of the night, in order to sound whether the gentle-"men who possessed the confidence of administration, were de-"termined to persevere in the same line of conduct which they "observed while out of office, and to endeavour for a redress of "grievances. For his own part he believed and trusted they "would go as far as possible to reform abuses, to obviate popular "complaints, and he should only say, that if not convinced "that they were of the same sentiments with himself, they should "never have his support."

These replies to specific questions, answering, by something more than implication, in the affirmative, had perhaps no influence on the conduct of a parliament, the members of which knew each other so intimately and thoroughly; but they contributed very much to give confidence in the Fitzwilliam administration out of that assembly, and to induce a patient acquiescence in the unprecedented grant of one million six hundred and twenty-eight thousand pounds, additional debt, and eighty thousand pounds, as estimated by the chancellor of the exchequer; but two hundred and fifty thousand pounds, as estimated by Sir Lawrence Parsons, of additional taxes.

When the Duke of Portland's letter of the 8th was not yet perhaps known to Mr. Grattan, he proceeded to carry into effect the conciliatory measures, for which he conceived that he and his friends had stipulated with the British cabinet. Accordingly on the 12th of February, he obtained leave to bring in a bill for repealing the police laws, which were extremely obnoxious to the citizens of Dublin, and against which every parish in that city had recently petitioned. He then likewise obtained leave to bring in the catholic bill, which was only resisted by Colonel Blacquiere, Mr. Ogle, and Dr. Duigenan.—On the same night, in pursuance of the same plan, it was announced by the chancellor of the exchequer, that a new arrangement would be made of the duties on beer and spirits, the object of which was, restraint in the abuse of spirituous liquors among the lower orders, and the substitute of a wholesome and nourishing beverage for a liquid poison. He also stated, that a new arrangement of the hearth tax would form part of the financial system. The session before, an attempt had been made to ease poor housekeepers of this burthensome tax; but such perplexing formalities had been established, that many people had continued to pay the tax, rather than take the necessary trouble for procuring the remission: this year, it was determined to exempt, absolutely and unconditionally, all houses having but one hearth.

hearth. The tax, however, upon leather was continued from the preceding session, although it was strongly resisted, as oppressive to the poor, by Mr. Duquery, who suggested in lieu of it, two shillings in the pound on all pensions, salaries, fees, perquisites, &c. This conduct was pointedly reprobated both by Mr. George Ponsonby and Mr. Grattan; by the latter, with an irritation such as he has more than once manifested, during his short connections with the government. Mr. Duquery, however, continued his opposition, and on a subsequent night, proposed as a commutation, a tax on absentees, which was supported by Sir Lawrence Parsons, but rejected by the house.

On the 23d of February, the new administration brought forward their proposed regulations of the treasury board. Lord Milton obtained leave to introduce a bill on that subject, founded on some resolutions proposed by Mr. Forbes, the scope of which was, to give to the Irish board an equally efficient controul with that possessed by the board of treasury in England; to compel the payment of balances by public officers; to exclude the commissioners of the treasury from sitting in parliament; to establish in correspondent officers the mutual checks and controul with which the auditor, clerk of the rolls, and teller of the exchequer in England are vested; and that all money arising from the receipt of the revenues should be paid into the bank of Ireland. On the following day, Mr. Grattan suggested the propriety of revising the revenue laws, and bringing the whole code within the compass of one consistent act.

But now the differences which had arisen between the English and Irish governments were made public. What was the motive for the change in the British councils, has given rise to various surmises. The ostensible reason was a difference of opinion respecting catholic affairs. Lord Fitzwilliam, however, has uniformly denied that they were the real motives for his recall.

recall. Mr. George Ponsonby too, in the house of commons, declared upon his honour as a gentleman, that in his opinion, the catholic question had no more to do with the recall of Lord Fitzwilliam, than Lord Macartney's embassy to China. "Lord "Fitzwilliam was to be recalled," said he, "and this was con-"sidered as the most popular pretext for the measure." Those who do not suspect from Mr. Pitt's cautious reserve, while the arrangements were under discussion, a preconcerted design to be executed as soon as the supplies were voted, and his lordship with his friends disgraced by having entered into the coalition—attribute the change to the successful representations of Mr. Beresford.

That gentleman, perceiving the blow that was aimed against himself and his connexions, did not foolishly waste his time in the anti-chamber of the castle, or on the opposition benches of the house of commons. He repaired to London, and there, it is presumed, set before the highest authority, the ingratitude of ministry, and the services of himself and family. They had been faithful servants for many years, during which time they could never be reproached with a murmur of disapprobation, or an expression of unwillingness, in undertaking any thing for the advantage of England. They had adhered to their sovereign in the trying crisis of the regency, and had not turned, like some of his newly adopted friends, to worship the rising sun. The situation of Ireland too, and the temper of the times, Mr. Beresford perhaps alledged, were such as should make every kind of reform, and of course, his dismissal be resisted. The debate of the 9th of February, may likewise have afforded ample room for awakening fears and exciting indignation: Mr. Grattan and Mr. Ponsonby appeared to have pledged themselves, at least by implication, to a reform in parliament, which it was the firm intention of the English ministers to withstand, and to a repeal of the convention bill, which had enabled government to stifle all expressions of discontent in Ireland. The ca-

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tholic bill may, under this point of view, have had its influence: it may have been represented as creating disaffection in the protestant mind, as inconsistent with the connexion and contrary to the coronation oath. It is not improbable too, that in this interview, some suggestions may have proceeded from that gentleman, which gave rise to the discovery mentioned in Lord Fitzwilliam's letter, that deferring that measure would be the means of doing a greater service to the British empire, than it had been capable of receiving since the union with Scotland. Whether these surmises are just, it is scarcely possible to ascertain; but perhaps the disagreement between the two governments, ought to be ascribed to a coincidence of Mr. Beresford's exertions, with the deliberate resolutions of some of the British cabinet and the weakness of others. A favourable pretext for carrying the consequences of that coincidence into effect, was afforded by the equivocal conduct of Lord Fitzwilliam and his friends; for while the former appeared, in his correspondence, to wish it had been practicable to keep back the catholic claims, and thus abandoned whatever there was of positive stipulation, on his part, for their being settled the very first session, his friends were giving explicit assurances and effectual assistance to the catholics in bringing them forward.

When the disagreement and its probable consequences were known, grief and consternation seized all who had flattered themselves, that the measures of his excellency's administration were to redress the grievances, remove the discontents, and work the salvation of Ireland. The event was also a subject of regret to those who, though they knew and did not disapprove of the irresistible progress with which men's minds were advancing to ulterior objects, yet wished to pass the intermediate period of expectation under an ameliorated system. The active republicans and new United Irishmen, however, were not sorry that the fallacy of ill-founded political hopes had been so speedily exposed, and they rejoiced that the agitation and controversies which were

were springing up, would so entirely engross the attention of their opulent, interested and ambitious adversaries, as that they and their proceedings would pass unnoticed. They well knew, that in the midst of disputes for power, places and emoluments, neither the great nor their connexions would condescend to bestow a thought upon despised malcontents, or the advances of an obscure system. They, therefore, not unwillingly, assisted in keeping the attention of government, and of the higher ranks, occupied with party contests; and even themselves yielded to that indignation, which disinterested spectators naturally feel, at the commission of perfidy and injustice.

Thus a very general expression of popular dissatisfaction was produced by the rumoured recall of Lord Fitzwilliam. In the house of commons, on the 26th of February, Sir Lawrence Parsons and Mr. Duquery, who had, in some instances, opposed the measures of his administration, were the foremost to prove their sorrow and alarm, by moving and seconding an address to his excellency, imploring his continuance in the country. This was withdrawn at the earnest request of Mr. George Ponsonby. On the second of March, Sir Lawrence moved to limit the money bills to two months, in consequence of the conduct of the British cabinet; but Lord Milton and Mr. George Ponsonby deprecated the measure, and after a long debate, it was rejected. The house of commons, however, unanimously resolved, that his excellency had by his conduct, since his arrival, merited the thanks of the house and the confidence of the people.

Out of parliament the discontent was more manifested. The catholics, from every part of Ireland, had petitioned for a repeal of the remaining popery laws; not because they felt any extensive interest, or great anxiety, that their rich merchants and landed gentlemen should have an opportunity of selling themselves, in a corrupt parliament, or of acquiring high offices and commissions, which could afford no benefit to the poor or middling

middling classes; but these laws were a violation of rights, a remaining badge of inferiority, and a leven for fermenting religious differences. The catholics, therefore, felt affection and gratitude to his excellency for his intentions in their favour, and a strong sense of insult offered to themselves, when they found those intentions made the pretext for his recall.

Those of that religion in Dublin, impelled by such feelings, assembled on the 27th, the second day after the disagreement was made public, and voted a petition to the king, on the subject of their own claims, and for the continuance of Lord Fitzwilliam in his office. This, from motives of delicacy, they forwarded by delegates. It is, however, not unworthy of remark, that they appointed as secretary to this delegation, Mr. Tone, whose talents and services to their cause, were unquestionably of the utmost importance, but whose connexion with Mr. Jackson and whose intentions with regard to France, were matters of public notoriety. The catholics in most parts of the kingdom met, and by resolutions or addresses, expressed the same sentiments.

The protestants too assembled extensively, and as warmly spoke their indignation at what they considered ministerial treachery and a public calamity. The freemen and freeholders of the city of Dublin, like the catholics, agreed to a petition to the king, and transmitted it by delegates. The merchants and traders of that city, with Mr. Abraham Wilkinson, the then governor of the bank of Ireland, at their head, expressed their sorrow at the rumoured recall of his excellency, and their entire concurrence in the removal of all religious disabilities.

The corporation, indeed, faithful to its principles, raised its voice against the catholic claims; but this measure of monopoly experienced a more formidable opposition than could have been expected in the sanctuary of the protestant ascendency. Many

other parts of the kingdom, such as the counties of Kildare, Wexford, Antrim, Londonderry, &c. followed the example of the freemen and freeholders in the capital; and the same sentiments seemed to pervade every part of the kingdom.

But whatever were the motives for recalling lord Fitzwilliam, they had more weight in the British cabinet than those expressions of dissatisfaction on the part of the Irish people. As the noble viceroy still continued to maintain the measures he had adopted for the government of Ireland, a cabinet council was held on the 10th of March, in which the duke of Portland, who had been himself almost determined to enter in person upon a crusade, against what he did not hesitate to call *the execrable system*, by which that country was ruled, concurred in the vote, and submitted to be the official instrument of transmitting the letters, recalling *his second self—his nearest and dearest friend—whom he had persuaded to accept the Irish government—and to whom he had committed the important office of reforming the manifold abuses in that government.* Earl Camden was appointed his successor, and sworn in the next day. He arrived in Dublin and assumed his office on the 31st.

The expression of dissatisfaction was not repressed in Ireland, even by its being known that the determination of the cabinet was fixed and irrevocable. Resolutions of sorrow and regret were now as general, as had been petitions and addresses. The workings of discontent appeared also, from certain minute traits, to be leading to an extensive adoption, or at least, to a covert approbation of the United Irish system. The words "union of the people"—"united with our brethren," are every where studiously introduced, and almost always distinguished by capitals or italics.

The catholics of Dublin met on the 9th of April, to receive the report of their delegates; and their resolutions would not afford

afford an unfair inference of the sentiments entertained by the generality of their persuasion. They unanimously thanked Mr. Tone, for the many important services he had rendered to the catholic body: "services which they truly declared, no grati-" tude could over-rate, and no remuneration could overpay." "We derive consolation," said they, "under the loss which "we all sustain by the removal of the late popular administra-" tion, in contemplating the rising spirit of harmony and co-" operation among all sects and descriptions of Irishmen, so ra-" pidly accelerated by that event; and we do most earnestly " recommend to the catholics of Ireland, to cultivate, by all " possible means, the friendship and affection of their protestant " brethren; satisfied as we are, that national union is national " strength, happiness and prosperity." Referring to passages in lord Fitzwilliam's letters, which appeared to imply an intimation from the cabinet, that if the repeal of the remaining popery laws was then withheld, it might, at a future opportunity, be used as the means of procuring a legislative union between the two countries, they unanimously adopted the following resolution: "That we are sincerely and unalterably attached to "the rights, liberties and independence of our native country; "and we pledge ourselves, collectively and individually to resist, "even our own emancipation, if proposed to be conceded upon "the ignominious terms of an acquiescence in the fatal measure "of an union with the sister kingdom."

If these resolutions had stood in need of interpretation, they would have received it, from the eloquent and daring speeches that were made at that day's meeting, by men, some of whose names are now well known to the public. Among the most conspicuous speakers were Dr. Ryan, (who died shortly afterwards, deeply deplored as a national loss, by those who knew his talents and worth) Dr. Mac Neven and Mr. Keogh.

Another incident also signalized that day, and was peculiarly characteristic of the public sentiment. It has been the constant

custom with the university of Dublin, to present addresses of congratulation to every newly arrived chief governor: that day was appointed for presenting their offering to Lord Camden.—While the procession was on its way, the students, as if with one consent, broke off, and left the provost and fellows to make what appearance before his excellency they might think fit, while they themselves turned into a coffee house at the Castle gate, and there prepared an address to Mr. Grattan, approving of his public character and conduct. This they presented directly; and having done so, they repaired in a body to Francis-street chapel where the catholics were assembled. They entered while Mr. Keogh was speaking; and that ready as well as able orator, instantly seized the incident, and hallowed the omen. They were received with the most marked respect and affection; the catholics taking that opportunity of shewing that the language of union and brotherly love, which they were uttering, only expressed the sentiments nearest their hearts.

If the discontent that was raised by the recal of lord Fitzwilliam, proved conducive to the views of the republicans and United Irishmen, their cause was still further promoted, by the entire developement of what were to have been the measures of his administration. These were enumerated by Mr. Grattan, when moving, on the 21st of April, for a committee to enquire into the state of the nation. Besides the catholic bill, he stated "that this administration had paid attention to the poverty of "the people, by plans for relieving the poor from hearth mo-"ney; had paid attention to their morals, by a plan encreasing "the duty on spirits; had paid attention to their health, by pro-"posing a plan to take off all duties on beer and ale; that a "plan for education had been intended; that a more equal trade "between the two countries had not escaped their attention; "that an odious and expensive institution, that obtained under "colour of protecting the city by a bad police, was abandoned "by that government, and a bill prepared for correcting the same;

"same; that a responsibility bill had been introduced; and a "bill to account for the public money by new checks, and in a "constitutional manner had been introduced by persons con- "nected with that government; that it was in contemplation "to submit for consideration some further regulations for the "better accounting for the public money, and for the better "collection of the revenue." But not a word of reform in parliament, of a repeal of the convention bill, or of a mitigation of the strong measures by which the former administration had coerced the people. Indeed Col. Stewart (since Lord Castlereagh) deprecating such measures, explicitly asked whether the late ministers, had they remained, would have supported a parliamentary reform, or a repeal of the convention bill; and Mr. Archdall said, that every body knew it was Lord Fitzwilliam's fixed determination to oppose every tendency to what was called parliamentary reform. Such queries and observations being suffered to pass without reply, it was clear that these measures, to which many considered that administration as bound, were never in its contemplation. The objects which it proposed to accomplish, were urged as proofs, that it was the best government Ireland could possibly hope for, in the present order of things: and those to which its professed principles would have seemed to lead it, but which, notwithstanding apparent pledges, it was forced by the very nature of its subordinate situation, to relinquish, were coupled with the measure, in which it was thwarted and perhaps duped, to shew to persons who wished to advance no further than reform and constitutional redress, that those things were rendered absolutely unattainable by the connexion with Great Britain.

Mr. Jackson's trial for high treason came on upon the 23d of April, and he was convicted on the evidence of Cockayne: he did not, however, suffer the penalties of the law; for a few days after, previous to his being brought up to receive sentence, he contrived to swallow a large dose of arsenic. The firmness with which

which he bore the excruciating pains of that poison, was very remarkable. A motion in arrest of judgment was to be made; but it is manifest he entertained no hope of its success, and only wished it might continue, until he should have escaped from all earthly tribunals. He concealed the pangs he was suffering so well, that when he was called upon to know what he had to say, why sentence should not pass upon him, though at the time actually unable to speak, with a smiling and unembarrassed air, he bowed and pointed to his Counsel. His fortitude did not fail him to the last; for it was scarcely suspected by the spectators that he was ill, until he fell down in the agonies of death, in the midst of his Counsel's argument.

This man possessed distinguished talents and acquirements; and the following anecdote shews that he entertained a high sense of honour. While he was preparing for his trial, and was fully apprised of what would most probably be its ultimate issue, a friend was, by the kindness of the jailor, permitted to remain with him until a very late hour at night, on business. After the consultation had ended, Dr. Jackson accompanied his friend to the outward door of the prison, which was locked, the key remaining in the door, and the keeper in a very profound sleep, probably oppressed with wine. There could have been no difficulty in his effecting an escape, even subsequent to the departure of his friend, and without his consent—but he adopted a different conduct; he locked the door after his guest, awoke the keeper, gave him the key, and retired to his appartment. During his imprisonment, he wrote and published a learned and able answer to Paine's Age of reason; and after his death, various prayers and homilies of his own composition were found in his pocket. His funeral was attended by numbers, even of a respectable rank of life, who, though they had been unconnected with him while living, dared to give this presumptive proof, that they were friendly to his mission.

The

The publicity which this trial gave to the schemes of the French, coincided aptly with the extension of the new United Irish system. From the very outset of that organization, a French invasion was deemed by its members, if not absolutely necessary, at least very adviseable, to the accomplishment of their objects. That trial reminded them afresh, that such a measure had been contemplated, and they imagined it had become more easy, after Jackson's arrest, by the conquest of Holland in the intermediate winter, and by the possession of the Dutch fleet.

The United Irishmen were at this time beginning to spread very rapidly in the counties of Down and Antrim; and the effects of their system might easily be traced by the brotherhood of affection, which, pursuant to the words of their test, it produced among Irishmen of every religious persuasion. Men who had previously been separated by sectarial abhorrence, were now joined together in cordial, and almost incredible amity. Of this perhaps, no instance more remarkable can be conceived, than the conduct of the covenanters, a sect still numerous in those two counties. By all the prejudices of birth and education, they appeared removed to the utmost possible extreme, from any kind of co-operation or intercourse with catholics. Their adherence to the solemn league and covenant, bound them to the accomplishment of the reformation in England, and Ireland, "according to the word of God, and the example of the best reformed churches;" while the traditional notions which they inherited were, that the reformation could only be brought about by coercion and penal laws. They were, however, lovers of liberty, and republicans by religion and descent: their concurrence in the general system was, therefore, not unimportant. To this effect, it was laid before them, that persecution in itself unjust, had been also found insufficient for reclaiming catholics; that the desired reformation could only be accomplished by the efforts of reason, which would be best promoted by mixing with the misled, and gradually convincing them

them of their errors; that affection worked more strongly upon ignorance and obstinacy than hatred; and that in doing justice to those men, by permitting to them the enjoyment of all their rights, the object of the solemn league and covenant would not be in the least counteracted, and the cause of liberty (for which an almost equal enthusiasm was felt) would be exceedingly promoted. Arguments so appropriate and just were too strong for prejudice. Covenanters in numbers became United Irishmen, and the most active promoters of the system. After this had gone on for some time among them, Quigley, a catholic priest, (whose name is since well known from his trial and conviction at Maidstone) went to a part of the country where they were settled, and was introduced as a fellow labourer in the common cause. The affection which those poor men shewed to one whom, shortly before, they would perhaps have regarded as a demon, was truly astonishing. Intelligence was dispatched to every part, of his arrival, and from every part they crowded to receive and caress him. But when they learned that this Romish priest was so sincere a lover of liberty, as to have been actually fighting at the capture of the Bastile, their joy was almost extravagant.

Such were the effects of this new system, as far as it had extended, while the zeal of its members was over-coming every other obstacle, and establishing it in every direction. It was almost entirely destitute of funds, by which mercenary assistance could be procured; but numbers were found ready to quit their daily occupations, and go on missions to different parts of the North.

As secresy was one of its vital principles, care was taken, from the very beginning, to guard against large meetings, by an arrangement, that no society should consist of more than thirty-six, and that when it amounted to that number, it should split into two societies of eighteen each, the members to be drawn

drawn by lot, unless in country places, where they might divide according to local situation: they were connected together and kept up their occasional communication by delegates. As they were now become very numerous, particularly in the county of Antrim, it was found necessary to form a general system of delegation, on a scale sufficiently large for their growing importance, and even capable of comprehending every possible increase. Accordingly, delegates were expressly appointed from almost every existing society, and the representatives of seventy-two met, for that purpose, at Belfast, on the 10th of May, 1795. In addition to what they found already established, respecting individual societies, they framed a system of committees, and thus completed the original constitution of the new United Irishmen; a brief abstract of which is as follows.

It first states the object of the institution to be, to forward a brotherhood of affection, a communion of rights, and an union of power, among Irishmen of every religious persuasion, and thereby to obtain a complete reform in the legislature, founded on the principles of civil, political, and religious liberty. It then proceeds to the rules of individual societies, such as the admission of members by ballot; the raising of a fund by monthly subscriptions; the appointment of a secretary and treasurer by ballot, once every three months; the election by ballot of two members from each society, who with the secretary were to represent it in a baronial committee, the regulation of some minor internal affairs; the taking of the test by every newly elected member, in a separate apartment, in the presence of the persons who proposed and seconded him, and of a member appointed by the chairman; after which he was to be brought into the body of the society, where he was again to take it publicly; the splitting of every society amounting in number to thirty-six, into two equal parts—the eighteen names drawn by lot were to be the senior society, and its delegates were to procure from the baronial committee a number for the

junior, according to which it was to be classed and recognized, and its delegates received by that committee; no society was to be recognized by any committee, unless approving of and taking the test, and amounting to seven members; lastly was laid down the order of business at each meeting. From these societies, committees took their origin, in an ascending series; the baronials consisted of their immediate delegates. When any barony or other district should contain three or more societies, it was determined that three members from each, appointed as already mentioned, were to form a baronial for three months. In order to preserve the necessary connection between all the parts, no committee in any new barony or district could act until properly constituted: for that purpose the secretary of the senior society was to request a deputation from the nearest baronial, to constitute a committee for that barony or district.—When the number of societies in any barony amounted to eight in order to prevent the committee's becoming too numerous, it had a right to form another baronial; but each was to represent at least three societies. That none might be unrepresented, baronials were empowered to receive delegates from the societies of a contiguous barony, which did not contain three. The baronials were also to correspond with societies or with individuals, who had been duly qualified as United Irishmen; and any business originating in one society, should, at the instance of its delegates, be laid by the baronial before the others. The county committees were to be formed when any county had three or more baronials, by two persons from each, to be chosen by ballot for three months; and until that took place, the existing baronial in any county had liberty to send delegates to the adjacent county committee. Provincials were in like manner to take place, when two or more counties in a province had their committees, by three from each, also chosen for three months by ballot; and where a provincial was not yet constituted, the county committees were to send delegates to the nearest provincial. The national committee was to consist of five delegates from each

each provincial. The names of committee men were not to be known by any person but those who elected them.

Whoever reflects on this constitution for a moment, will perceive that it was prepared with the most important views. It formed a gradually extending representative system, founded on universal suffrage, and frequent elections. It was fitted to a barony, county, or province, while the organization was confined within those limits; but if the whole nation adopted the system, it furnished a national government.

The 10th of May, 1795, therefore, produced the most important consequences to Ireland, and such as will be remembered by the latest posterity. Curiosity will naturally be solicitous to learn, who and what manner of men they were, that dared to harbour such comprehensive and nearly visionary ideas. They were almost universally farmers, manufacturers, and shop-keepers, the representatives of men certainly not superior to themselves; but they and their constituents were immoveable republicans. After the business, for which they had been deputed, was finished, the person whom they had appointed their chairman, stated that they had undertaken no light matter; that it was adviseable to be ascertained whether their pursuits and objects were the same; and that he would, therefore, with the permission of the meeting, ask every delegate what were his views, and as he apprehended, those of his society. This being done, every individual answered in his turn, a republican government, with separation from England, and assigned his reasons for those views.

Statesmen and historians have been, perhaps at all times, too much inclined to characterise the people as a blind, unthinking mass; and to attribute its movements to the skill and artifice of a few factious demagogues, whom they suppose able, by false pretences, to excite or still at pleasure, the popular storm.—

In the present instance, it is unquestionably a mistake, which has led to many erroneous conclusions, and even to some false steps, to imagine that the people were deluded into the United Irish system, by ambitious leaders, who held out as a pretence, catholic emancipation and parliamentary reform. These *were* very seriously pursued, until the first was to a great degree acquired, and the attainment of the last became desperate. From this despair, and the measures that produced it, arose a change of objects; but it arose with the people themselves. In Ireland, the catholics in general, particularly the poor, had long entertained a rooted wish for separation, which they considered as synonymous with national independence. The desire for this and the more modern spirit of republicanism, having been equally the result of undoubted grievances and protracted sufferings, sprung up principally where those grievances were most oppressive and longest endured—with the lowest orders, whose experience and feeling supplied the place of learning and reflection. As the United Irish system ascended into the upper ranks, it engulphed into it, numbers who afterwards indeed appeared as leaders; but while these men were ignorant of that system, and very earnestly aiming at reform, multitudes of the people, whom they are supposed to have deluded, were as earnestly intent upon a republic: and even after they coincided in endeavouring for that form of government, they would perhaps have been more ready than their poorer associates, to abandon the pursuit, if reform had been granted.

In the mean time, parliament was occupied with measures of a very different nature and importance, from those just described: its attention was engaged in discussing the motives of Lord Fitzwilliam's recall, and in adopting or rejecting the proposed measures of his administration. The bill for regulating the treasury, the alteration of the police laws, substituting in lieu of that institution, a parochial watch for Dublin, as well as the regulations restraining the abuse of spiritual liquors, and giving

giving encouragement to the brewing trade, were allowed to take effect; the project of equalizing the commercial duties between the two countries, was evaded by adjournment; but the catholic bill introduced by Mr. Grattan, was rejected on the 4th of May. That question had now lost much of its public interest; not only because its absolute importance was little, and that little daily vanishing, but also because, from the change of administration, the urging of it was attended with no prospect of success. It served, however, to produce a very long and animated debate in the house of commons. The splendid talents and argumentative powers of Mr. Grattan were called forth again, to illustrate, adorn and diversify a subject on which he had more than once bestowed such efforts as would have exhausted any ordinary mind.

Opposite in opinions, reasonings, matter and manner was the speech of Dr. Duigenan, conceived and delivered in a stile peculiar to himself.

On this night Mr. Arthur O'Connor first attracted public notice. Quitting the uninteresting question before the house, and profiting by a well known argument against the catholic claims, that if complied with, they would overturn the constitution and church establishment, he took a bold and comprehensive review of both; examined what he alledged to be the principles on which they were founded; the corruptions by which they were supported, and the vices to which they gave birth: from thence he inferred, that if the predicted subversion were, in truth, to take place, great good to the whole nation, would be the immediate consequence. Although it was impossible to arrive at this conclusion, except by arguments familiar to all reflecting republicans, and often, but covertly, urged in the Northern Star and their other favourite publications, yet this speech excited the utmost astonishment: partly from its ability, partly as coming from an unknown man, that had previously

viously supported the measures of government, and partly because it was spoken within the walls of parliament. It also procured to its author uncommon popularity with the Irish people, who are always ready to receive with open arms, a repentant friend.

The bill was lost by 155 to 84; a disparity that may perhaps excite conjecture as to what the numbers *would have been*, if Lord Fitzwilliam had continued chief governor.

Another question also relating to the members of the same religion, was still in agitation. Dr. Hussey had been sent over, as already stated, by the British cabinet, to prepare and superintend a plan for educating their clergy, and one was accordingly submitted to parliament. Whatever connexion it may have had with the bargain, said to have been entered into between their prelates and Lord Westmoreland's administration, it was highly approved of by those reverend persons; but a strong petition was presented against it by a number of catholic laymen. Their objections were, that in the college, which the proposed plan went to establish, trustees different from the principal and professors were empowered to regulate the course of education, and also to appoint professors and scholars on the foundation, *without any kind of examination into their merits or qualifications;* and also, that the plan as far as it operated, obstructed the educating together of catholics and protestants: the petitioners, therefore, strongly reprobated it as tending to perpetuate a line of separation, which the interest of the country required to be obliterated, and as preventing early habits from producing a liberal and friendly intercourse through life. Such objections might perhaps have deserved the attention of philosophic legislators; they were, however, entirely disregarded by parliament, and the plan was adopted without alteration—almost without discussion or debate.

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The conclusion of this session was rendered remarkable, by something like impotency or unwillingness in the house of commons, to defend its own dignity. A Mr. Ottiwell, a subordinate clerk in the revenue, had proposed to the commissioners of wide streets in Dublin, for a large quantity of ground, near Carlisle-bridge: his proposal was accepted, and in consequence of the bargain, the public lost sixty thousand pounds. Some circumstances having raised a suspicion, that it was the result of fraud and collusion, accomplished through the influence of Mr. Beresford, who was generally believed to be a partner in the profits, a committee to enquire into the transaction was appointed in the reforming administration of Lord Fitzwilliam. When that nobleman was displaced, however, the Beresford interest having been restored, Mr. Ottiwell took courage, and refused to answer to the committee, certain questions not tending to criminate himself. The contempt was reported to the house, and he was summoned to the bar. Having refused there likewise to answer, it was moved to take him into custody. This motion being resisted, the speaker rose, and desired, that as the house was thin, gentlemen should not go away—instantly, above a dozen members withdrew, as if they had conceived the caution to be a hint; on a division, the total numbers not amounting to forty, the house was of course adjourned, and Mr. Ottiwell returned home unmolested. In two days after, the motion was renewed and carried; but Mr. Ottiwell staid within doors, and his servants refused to let the serjeant at arms see him. Thus did this man who appeared to be concealing, by contumacy, an alledged fraud upon the public to the amount of sixty thousand pounds, continue to the very end of the session, to insult the dignity of that house, and to defy those privileges which had so often stricken terror into the editors of newspapers and others accused of abusing the liberty of the press.

The labours of parliament were interrupted by prorogation on the 5th of June; but the business of the United Irishmen had been

been carried on, and still proceeded without interruption. It has been more than once stated, that they were anxious to procure the co-operation of France; and the circumstances about to be detailed, will shew that they never lost sight of that cardinal object. Very early in 1795, while their organization extended no further than individual societies, communicating by delegates, they ventured to appoint a person to go to that country for the express purpose of soliciting an invasion: his departure, however, was postponed by various circumstances; and the trial of Mr. Jackson took place. The facts that were disclosed on that occasion, and the payment of the vote of fifteen hundred pounds by the catholics, which was not made till after the recall of Lord Fitzwilliam, determined Mr. Tone to go to America. His talents and inclinations were indisputable; it was, therefore, conceived that his emigration might be rendered subservient to the views of the United Irishmen, without the intervention of any other agent. At this time their system had reached no higher than a committee for the county of Antrim. Certain members of that committee, having then cast their eyes upon Tone, consulted with confidential friends, not actually in the organization, but with whom he had been in habits of unreserved communication. The result was, that after his arrival at Belfast, on his way to America, perfectly ignorant of the business and of the new system, to which he did not belong, he was empowered by those persons, some of whom held the highest situations at that time in the system, to set forth to the French government, through its agent in America, the state of Ireland and its dispositions. For that purpose, they were completely developed to him; the rising strength of the organization was pointed out; and also the great probability of getting into it all the defenders, the ground of which was, even then, actually laid.

Mr. Tone left Ireland on the 16th of June. When he arrived off the coast of America, he was near having all his prospects, personal

personal and political, blasted, by an outrage which British ships of war were in the habit of committing, with impunity, against the American flag. The vessel in which he took his passage, (the Cincinnatus of Wilmington) was stopped and boarded by three English frigates, (the Thetis, the Hussar, and the Esperance) for the express purpose of pressing into the British service, such sailors and passengers as might be thought fit. The party entrusted with the execution of this duty, after treating the officers and crew of the American ship with characteristic rudeness, pressed all the hands but one, and above fifty of the passengers, who were obviously not sea-faring men, and were sailing under the protection of a neutral flag. Mr. Tone, on one occasion, attempted to interfere in favour of the father of a family whose wife and children were on board; but the only consequence of his interference was, that he himself was dragged into the boat, to be made a common sailor in the British navy.

This would probably have been his fate, but that the heart of the commanding officer was accessible to the distraction and despair of a sister, a wife and children. He was so far effected by the screams of Mrs. Tone, by the agonies of a beautiful and interesting female, and by the tears and cries of her children, that he released his victim.

Soon after Tone's landing in America, having waited on Citizen Adet, the French minister, he communicated to him the information and commission with which he was charged, but had the mortification to be very coldly received.

Those, however, who deputed him, had every reason to be convinced that their conduct met the wishes of the United Irishmen. Not long after Tone had left Ireland, a provincial committee for Ulster was organized, in consequence of the committees for the counties of Down and Antrim having been consti-

tuted. As this provincial was to meet only once a month, and and its members to come from different and distant parts of the country, it determined, about the end of August, to form a body, not specified in the constitution, which was called the executive, because its duty was entirely confined within the limits denoted by that term, it having no originating power, and being totally subservient to the provincial. During the intervals of that committee's meetings, the executive was to execute what had been ordered, and afterwards to report its own proceedings at the next opportunity. It was to be a watch upon the government, and to call extra meetings of the provincial, if necessary. As its connection was only with that committee, its members were unknown to any but those who appointed them.

While this organization was advancing, the wish of the people for French alliance developed itself more and more, in each successive stage. At a county committee held in Antrim, during that summer, a member from an obscure district, proposed that it should be recommended to the provincial, to open a communication with France. This was unanimously agreed to, and the recommendation transmitted to the provincial, by whom it was unanimously adopted: it was then given in charge to be carried into effect by the executive; which, thereupon, was informed of every thing that had been done respecting Tone. It therefore did not think fit to take any new step, further than causing fresh advices to be dispatched to him, setting forth the state of Ireland at the time of writing; the risings, prosecutions and convictions at the assizes in Leinster and Connaught; the transportations without trial in the latter province during that summer, and the growing discontents that were becoming more apparent and formidable. He was therefore urged to press, both on the score of French and Irish interests, for an invasion. In consequence of this communication, he again waited on Citizen Adet, whose manner of reception was now entirely changed.

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That minister had in the interval written home for instructions, and the answer of the directory had arrived, ordering him to press Tone to repair to France without delay. This was accordingly urged in the strongest manner, and Tone sailed from America on the 25th of December. After a very quick passage, he was received by the government in the most confidential and respectful manner. In some time, and on a more intimate knowledge of him, he was placed in the army, and promoted to the rank of chef de brigade, and adjutant-general.

The statement which had been transmitted to him, amply justified his impressing on the directory the magnitude and universality of popular discontent in Ireland; for after he had left that country, insurrection and open disturbances began to show themselves in many places, but particularly in the provinces of Leinster, Connaught and Ulster. The defenders in the two former were active in encreasing their numbers, and seemed, at length, to imagine themselves equal to some great exertion; they assembled very frequently in the counties near Dublin, especially Meath, and stripped many houses of arms. They appeared in still greater strength in the counties of Leinster, Roscommon and Longford, where at first there seemed no force equal to resist them. These proceedings made the summer assizes of that year remarkable for the number of convictions and capital executions. Of these, the trial and conviction at Naas, in the county of Kildare, of Lawrence O'Connor, a Schoolmaster, and the most respectable person, in point of rank, that had been yet discovered in the defender system, was made particularly conspicuous by his firmness and devoted attachment to his principles. When sentence was going to be passed upon him, he boldly defended the institution, on the ground of the oppressed state of the poor; and when the judge who was performing that awful office, struck with his appearance and conduct, asked him, had he any wife or children, "my Lord," he replied, "God will

take care of them, for I die in a good cause." He suffered on the 7th of September, without derogating from his previous demeanour.

In the Connaught counties, the trials were not as numerous in proportion as in Leinster. Lord Carhampton had gone down to quell the insurrections, and after he had succeeded, thinking perhaps that legal proceedings were tedious and sometimes uncertain in their issue, he delivered the gaols of most of their inhabitants, by taking such as he thought fit, and sending them, without form of trial, or other warrant but his own military order, to serve on board the fleet. In this manner, nearly 1300 persons were transported, not by their own connivance, nor as a kind of voluntary commutation of what they might suffer if rigorously prosecuted. On the contrary, it was not even pretended, that those selected were accused of the most serious crimes, or the most likely to meet conviction before a jury; nor was the act attributed by the inhabitants of the country, to a misjudging lenity. Indeed the objects of this summary measure were frequently seen tied down on carts, in the bitterest agonies, crying out incessantly for trial, but crying in vain. This conduct marked his lordship's attachment to government too strongly, not to have its imitators. Magistrates, therefore, without military commissions, but within the influence of his example, assumed to themselves also the authority of transporting without trial.

In the province of Ulster, the county of Armagh and its borders exhibited a scene of more melancholy disturbances, and more abominable oppressions than afflicted or disgraced the rest of Ireland. The religious animosities that had raged so violently in 1793, appeared to have been subdued by the combined efforts of liberal catholics and dissenters, by the unremitting exertions of the United Irishmen of that day, and by the conciliatory sentiments which flowed from the press, as far as it was in the same interests. The press, however, was subsequently reduced almost

to

to silence; and the recent coercive statutes had nearly annihilated all public efforts by united, or even liberal Irishmen, on any subject of general politics, except during the transitory administration of Lord Fitzwilliam. The barriers to the revival of those animosities being thus broken down, they again desolated the country with augmented fury. The peep-'o'-day-boys, who originally pretended only to enforce the popery laws, by depriving catholics of their arms, now affected more important objects. They claimed to be associated for the support of a protestant government, and a protestant succession, which they said were endangered by the encreased power of the catholics in the state, and they therefore adopted the name of *Orange-men*, to express their attachment to the memory of that prince to whom they owed those blessings. With this change of name, they asserted they had also gained an accession of strength: for the peep-o'-day-boys only imagined they were supported by the law of the land, in their depredations on their catholic neighbours; but the Orange-men boasted a protection greater than even that of law—the connivance and concealed support of those who were bound to see it fairly administered. Thus emboldened, and as they alledged, reinforced, they renewed their ancient persecutions: but not content with stripping catholics of arms, they now went greater lengths than they had ever done before, in adding insult to injury sometimes by mocking the solemnities of their worship, and at others, even by firing into the coffins of the dead, on their way to sepulture.

The catholics were by no means inclined to submit with tameness to these outrages. The defender system had nearly included all of that persuasion in the lower ranks, and scarcely any others were to be found in the neighbourhood. They seized some opportunities of retaliating, and thus restored to defenderism, in that part of the country, its original character of a religious feud. These mutual irritations still encreasing, at length produced open hostilities. An affray near Lough Brickland,

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on the borders of the counties of Down and Armagh, and another at the fair of Loughgall, preceded and led to a more general engagement, in the month of August, at a place called the Diamond, near Portadown, in the county of Armagh. For some days previous to this, both parties had been preparing and collecting their forces; they seized the different passes and roads; had their advanced posts, and were in some measure encamped and hutted. No steps, however, were taken by the magistrates of the country; nor, as far as can be inferred from any visible circumstances, even by government itself, to prevent this religious war, publicly levied and carried on, in one of the most populous, cultivated and highly improved parts of the kingdom: nay more, the party which provoked the hostilities, and which the event has proved to have been the strongest, boasted of being connived at, for its well known loyalty and attachment to the constitution.

Whatever may have been the motives for this inaction, certain it is, that both parties assembled at the Diamond, to the amount of several thousands. The defenders were the most numerous, but the Orangemen had an immense advantage in point of preparation and skill, many of them having been members of the old volunteer corps, whose arms and discipline they still retained, and perverted to very different purposes, from those that have immortalized that body. The contest, therefore, was not long or doubtful; the defenders were speedily defeated, with the loss of some few killed and left on the field of battle, besides the wounded, whom they carried away. After this, in consequence of the interference of a catholic priest and of a country gentleman, a truce between both parties was agreed upon, which was unfortunately violated in less than twenty-four hours. The two bodies that had consented to it, for the most part dispersed; the district, however, in which the battle was fought, being entirely filled with Orangemen, some of them still remained embodied, but the catholics returned home

home. In the course of next day, about seven hundred defenders from Keady, in a remote part of the county, came to the succour of their friends, and ignorant of the armistice, attacked the Orangemen, who were still assembled. The associates of the latter being on the spot, quickly collected again, and the defenders were once more routed. Perhaps this mistake might have been cleared up, and the treaty renewed, if the resentment of the Orangemen had not been fomented and cherished by persons to whom reconciliation of any kind was hateful. The catholics, after this transaction, never attempted to make a stand, but the Orangemen commenced a persecution of the blackest die. They would no longer permit a catholic to exist in the county. They posted up on the cabins of those unfortunate victims this pithy notice, "to hell or Connaught;" and appointed a limited time in which the necessary removal of persons and property was to be made. If after the expiration of that period, the notice had not been entirely complied with, the Orangemen assembled, destroyed their furniture, burnt the habitations, and forced the ruined family to fly elsewhere for shelter. So punctual were they in executing their threats, that after some experiments, none were found rash enough to abide the event of non-compliance. In this way, upwards of seven hundred catholic families in one county, were forced to abandon their farms, their dwellings, and their properties, without any process of law, and even without any alledged crime, except their religious belief be one.

While these outrages were going on, the resident magistrates were not found to resist them, and in some instances were even more than inactive spectators. The arm of government too, seemed palsied; or its strength exhausted by its efforts in Connaught to restrain the subdued insurgents, and by the vigilant activity of the commander in that province, to transport the suspected without trial. The county of Armagh, however, and its neighbourhood, were not destitute of military force, able

able and willing to repress those outrages. The Queen's county militia, consisting mostly of catholics, was there, and exceedingly incensed at the unresisted, unrestrained, and even unnoticed, persecution against that religion, which it was forced to witness.

But though the protecting hand of government, or of the magistracy, was not held forth to the oppressed, they were not utterly abandoned. The United Irishmen endeavoured to allay the animosities by conciliatory efforts, as well as to bring to punishment the most daring violators of the law, and the magistrates, from whose suspicious inactivity they derived most succour. This, it was hoped, would produce many advantages. The United Irishmen would convince those forlorn people of their sincerity in seeking for the entire abolition of all religious distinctions, and perhaps induce them, by gratitude and interest, to enter into the union. If redress was to be obtained, or the protestant persecution to be checked, the catholics would owe to their exertions, at least a temporary relief from immediate sufferings, until the fulness of time should arrive for decisive remedies; but if the alledged connivance and support of magistrates and higher authorities should succeed in frustrating legal prosecutions, at least the horrible atrocities themselves would be exposed beyond the possibility of concealment or denial; and from the failure of the experiment, it was expected the proscribed would at last conclude, that their protection was not to be found in perverted laws, or delusive tribunals.

Prosecutions were therefore commenced and carried on by the executive, at the desire of the provincial committee of the United Irishmen, against some of the most notorious offenders, and some of the most guilty magistrates; but that measure appeared only to redouble the outrages. Many of those who attempted to swear examinations, were killed or forced to fly, and others compelled by the fears of death, to retract or contradict the depositions

depositions they had given. The applications were, in this manner, almost entirely defeated; or, if they succeeded, the proceedings were studiously protracted by every legal artifice; even the verdicts of juries, summoned by sheriffs, and influenced by magistrates, themselves labouring under heavy suspicions, were sometimes interposed between the prosecutors and justice. Effectual relief was thus indeed, for the most part, withheld from the oppressed; but they learned to look upon the United Irishmen as their only friends, to confide in the sincerity of those protestants who had joined in the union, and no longer to look, with hope or affection, towards the existing law or its remedies.

These objects were likewise accomplishing, at the same time, by other means. The steps that were taken against the defenders in Leinster and Connaught, and the house-rackings in the county of Armagh, had forced many wretches to abandon their homes, and seek for shelter where they might be unknown and unsuspected. Some of these unhappy fugitives were invited to Belfast, from whence they were received by the Presbyterian families in the counties of Down and Antrim; they were secured from danger, provided with employment, treated with affectionate hospitality, and the hereditary prejudices they had imbibed against northerns and dissenters, were lost in the overflowings of their gratitude. To their friends, whom necessity had not compelled to flight, they communicated the intelligence of their safety and happiness; thus spreading the fame of United Irish sincerity and attachment to remote districts, where the system was then unknown.

But the most important accession of strength gained by that body, at this period, arose from their successful interference with the defenders, particularly in the counties of Down and Antrim. From the first formation of the union, its most active

members were extremely anxious to learn the views and intentions of the defenders. The latter, it was manifest, wished a redress of many of those grievances, against which the efforts of the former were also directed; but their wishes were not sufficiently seconded by intelligence, nor did their institution appear calculated for co-operation on an extensive scale: it seemed almost exclusively catholic, and as far as could be ascertained, was not sufficiently representative. Besides, as most counties had something peculiar to themselves, either in their test, their formalities, or their signs, a defender in one county was not, therefore, one in another; and the association or rather mass of associations, wanted an uniformity of views and actions. As it owed its origin to religious animosities, and was almost entirely composed of illiterate persons, there was reason to apprehend, it might still be vitiated by bigotry and ignorance, and that instead of reserving its physical force for one object and one effort, it might waste itself, as was actually the case in Connaght, in partial and ill directed insurrections against local grievances. The united system, on the other hand, by pursuing only one thing, "an equal, full and adequate representation of the people," secured an uniformity of views, and by fixing attention on the state of the representation, as the fruitful parent of every other evil, it suggested, wherever it gained admission, a remedy for the oppressions by which the inhabitants were most afflicted. Proceeding as it did, on the principle of abolishing all political distinctions on account of religion, and of establishing a brotherhood of affection among Irishmen of every religious persuasion, it struck at the root of bigotry, received the support, and secured the co-operation of every sect, that was not rendered hostile by an immediate interest in the abuses it proposed to remedy. Organized as it was under a series of committees which were connected together to the highest rank, it was capable of the most perfect co-operation, and had in itself, all the advantages

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of a provisional representative government, to which it was habituating its members, before they could be called upon to establish a national constitution.

This immense superiority of advantages in favour of the united system, which clearly proved that it was the result of settled design and reflection, while the other seemed to derive its birth from accident and ignorance, was pointed out to the defenders in the counties where the union was most prevalent. There was no repugnancy in the tests of the two bodies, and many catholics had, from the commencement, belonged to both. They persuaded other defenders to follow their example. Protestant United Irishmen too, resolved to break the exclusively catholic appearance of defenderism; there being nothing in the test or regulations to prevent them, they were sworn into that body, and carried along with them their information, tolerance and republicanism. They pointed out to their new associates, all that has been already stated in the comparison between the two systems; and set before them, that the *something* which the defenders vaguely conceived, *ought to be done for Ireland*, was, by separating it from England, to establish its real as well as nominal independence; and they urged the necessity of combining into one body, all who were actuated with the same views. At last their exertions were favoured with entire success. The defenders, by specific votes in their own societies, agreed to be sworn United Irishmen, and incorporated in large bodies into the union. Thus did they in those counties, merge into the broadest and best concerted institution, which from henceforth, spread through their catholic districts with surprising rapidity; the inhabitants having abandoned whatever were the peculiarities of their own association.

The northern United Irishmen likewise pursued their scheme still further. The executions in Meath, Kildare, and latterly in

the capital itself, shewed to them that defenderism had reached so far, and was likely to extend through all the catholic parts of the kingdom. Weldon, Hart, Kennedy, and others, were found guilty in Dublin, in the latter end of 1795, of high treason, as being defenders, and met their fate with that enthusiasm and fortitude, which political as well as religious sufferers have, in almost all ages, exhibited. The evidence on those trials shewed that the views of the catholics of that rank of life, in and near the metropolis, though they had never yet heard of the united system, were perfectly conformable to those of the northern republicans. This coincidence determined the latter to open a communication which should pave the way for the extension of their own organization. They accordingly dispatched persons up to Dublin, who found means to explain themselves with some of the principal defenders of the counties of Meath, Dublin and elsewhere. This caused deputies from them to be sent to Belfast, to examine if the views of the north corresponded with theirs, and how far its sincerity might be relied on. These men on their arrival there, were soon convinced that the northerns were more enlightened, and as ardent as themselves, and that their sincerity was too often proved and two explicitly manifested to be doubted. On their return home, they communicated a detail of the views of the union, and laid the foundation for the adoption of that system by the catholics who deputed them.

The impression which was made by all those measures on the defenders, gave the United Irishmen a ready access to the militia regiments, as they arrived in the north. These were mostly composed of catholics, having come from the other provinces; in many instances they were already defenders, that association having spread into the counties where they were raised. The progressive steps were now made easy: the catholic soldier had no reluctance to become a defender; the defender was quickly induced to follow the example of those where he was quartered, and

and to become an United Irishman. The union thus spread among them very extensively, and the militia regiments were often vehicles by which both systems were carried to different and remote districts.

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INTRODUCTION.

INTRODUCTION

TO A

DIGEST OF THE POPERY LAWS,

BY THE HON. SIMON BUTLER.

REFERRED TO IN PAGE II.

ON the 21st of January, 1792, the society of United Irishmen of Dublin, with the Hon. SIMON BUTLER in the chair, received the report of its committee appointed to enquire into the popery laws, at that time in force in the realm. This able and striking digest of the statutes enacted by British power and influence, against the great majority of the inhabitants of Ireland, brought the whole of that monstrous code under one view, made a reference to its detailed enormities easy, and effected more in bringing the system and its authors into abhorrence, than had been ever done by any other publication. The report classed the popery laws under the following general heads, viz:

EDUCATION,
GUARDIANSHIP,
MARRIAGE,
SELF-DEFENCE,
EXERCISE OF RELIGION,
ENJOYMENT AND DISPOSITION OF PROPERTY,
ACQUISITION OF PROPERTY,
FRANCHISES.

A second

A second edition of this work being almost immediately called for, the following view, divested as much as could be of technical expressions, was prefixed to it by way of introduction.

" As the Irish popery laws have at length become a subject of so much notorious consideration as well as abhorrence, and as their violence has of late years undergone some mitigation through the liberality of the times, and the deep impression made by the exemplary good conduct of the great catholic body, it is thought necessary to prefix to this second edition of our report, a simple view of the actual state of the popery laws, for the reader, less habituated to the intricacies of statute reading. In doing this we wave all observation except what is necessary to render the intention of the legislature distinct and evident, and we forego that method in which the legislature has arranged the various regulations of which those statutes are composed, wishing to state their present operation in a short and familiar manner.

EDUCATION.

" In every well regulated community, the education of youth has been an object of the greatest notice.

" The Irish popery laws have not been inoperative on this point.

" Those who are acquainted with the constitution of our university, need not be informed, that none, except those who conform to the established church, can be admitted to study there, and that none can obtain the degrees therein, who have not previously taken all the tests, oaths and declarations; so that papists are entirely excluded from education in the authorized establishment for learning in their own country.

" No

" No *popish university* or *college* can be *erected* or *endowed.*

" No popish school can be *endowed.*

" But, if we truly conceive the sense of the legislature, (which from the obscurity of its language in this as in other instances is not easy,) a papist, on taking the oath of allegiance, and subscribing the declaration prescribed by the 13th and 14th Geo. 3. ch. 35. does thereby *qualify* himself to instruct in learning, publicly and privately, youth of his own persuasion ; but lest he should educate any protestants, and thereby have opportunity of making proselytes, the law has provided that he shall not receive into his school any protestant, or become an usher, under-master or assistant to a protestant schoolmaster.

Protestants and converts from popery, educating or permitting their children (not already papists, and above *fourteen* years of age) to be educated papists, shall be subject to such disabilities as papists are.

" Any *convert,* if a *justice of peace,* who educates any of his children under *sixteen* years of age in the popish religion, shall, on conviction of acting as such, suffer one year's imprisonment, forfeit £100, and be incapable of being an executor, administrator or guardian.

" The children of papists are deemed papists until they conform, except such as from the age of *twelve* years have been constantly bred up in the protestant religion, and received the sacrament according to the church of Ireland, who shall be reputed protestants, unless they at any time after the age of *eighteen* years declare themselves of the communion of the church of Rome, or be present at mattins or vespers according to the practice of that church, in which case they shall be subject to all the penalties affecting converts relapsing to popery.

" Upon

" Upon this view of the law concerning education, the nation may judge of the *liberal indulgence afforded to the Roman catholics by admitting them to the benefits of education.*

GUARDIANSHIP.

" The law concerning guardianship stands simply thus:—Papists, other than ecclesiastics, taking the oath of allegiance, and subscribing the declaration prescribed by the 13th and 14th Geo. 3. ch. 35, are thereby qualified to be guardians of their own children or of the child of a papist, but not of the child of a protestant.

MARRIAGE.

" As to the law concerning marriage, it is extremely simple in its severity, as it consists of but one regulation for every marriage *celebrated* by a popish priest, between two protestants or between a papist and any person who has been or has professed him or herself to be a protestant at any time within twelve months before such marriage, shall be null and void without any process, judgment or sentence of law whatsoever; and nevertheless, the popish priest who *celebrates* such marriage shall on conviction be guilty of felony without benefit of clergy or of the statute, and suffer *death* accordingly: for, says the lawyer, the *celebration* and not the *marriage*, constitutes his offence.—In order to obtain evidence of the fact, two justices of the peace are impowered to summon any persons whom they *suspect* to have been present at any marriage, which they *suspect* to have been made contrary to this law, as well as the parties *suspected* to be married, and such *suspected parties* and *suspected witnesses* declining to appear, or refusing to declare upon oath their knowledge of the facts, or refusing after declaration of the facts to enter

into recognizance to prosecute, shall be imprisoned for three years.

" It must be admitted, that the legislature has lately declared, that it shall and may be lawful to and for protestants and persons professing the popish religion to intermarry, provided the marriage be celebrated by a clergyman of the established church; but when it is considered that, in the Roman catholic persuasion, marriage is a *sacrament*, and ought to be celebrated according to the rites and ceremonies of that church, it will be readily granted, that by establishing the legality of inter-marriages no very *liberal indulgence* was offered to the Roman catholics, the more especially as there is a saving in favour of the law that enacts, " that a protestant married to a papist, or a con-" vert married since his conformity to a papist, shall not be en-" titled to vote, at any election of *members to serve in parlia-" ment*, in right of being a *freeholder* or *protestant inhabitant of " a borough.*"

SELF-DEFENCE.

" There is another head upon which the legislature has thought proper to change the course of the common law: it is the *right* of *self-defence*, which is complicated with the use of *arms*. Now this right, though one of the laws of nature, and indeed the first of them, is yet so liable to so many dangerous abuses, that wise communities have found it necessary to set several restrictions upon it, especially temporary ones, on some imminent danger to the public from foreign invasion. The method which the statute law of Ireland has taken upon this delicate article is, to get rid of all the difficulties at once, by an universal prohibition to all persons, who are not protestants, at all times, and under all circumstances, to use or keep any kind of weapons whatsoever. In order to inforce this regulation, severe penalties, without any regard

regard to proportion, are inflicted; new modes of inquisition are enjoined; the largest powers are vested in the lowest magistrates. Any justice of the peace, or any magistrate of a city or town corporate, with or *without* information, by themselves or by their warrant, at their discretion, whenever they think proper, at any hour of the day or *night*, are impowered *forcibly* to enter and to search the house of any papist, or of any *protestant* whom they *suspect* to keep arms in trust for a papist. This, we say, they may do at their discretion; and it seems a pretty ample power to be vested in the hands of that class of magistrates.

"Besides the discretionary and occasional search, the law has prescribed one that is general and periodical. It is to be made annually, under the warrants of justices of peace and magistrates of corporations, by the high and petty constables, or any others whom they choose to authorize, with all the powers, and with the same circumstances in every respect, which attend the discretionary and occasional search.

"Not trusting however to the activity of the magistrates proceeding officially, the law has invited voluntary informers by the distribution of considerable rewards, and even pressed involuntary into the service by the dread of very heavy penalties.—With regard to the latter method, justices of the peace and magistrates of corporations are empowered to summon before them any person whatsoever, and to tender to him an oath, by which they oblige him to discover concerning all persons, without distinctions of propinquity or connection, who have any arms concealed contrary to law, and even whether he himself has any. His refusal to appear, or appearing, his refusal to discover and inform, subjects him to *fine and imprisonment, or* such *corporal punishment* of *pillory or whipping* as the *court* shall in its *discretion* think proper.—Thus all persons, peers and peeresses, protestants as well as papists, may be summoned to perform this honourable service, by the bailiff of a corporation of a few straggling cottages, and

refusing to perform it, are liable to be fined and imprisoned, pilloried or whipped.—The punishment for the first offence in *peers* and *peeresses*, if not pilloried or whipped, is £300, and for the second offence the punishment is no less than the penalties of a person attainted in a præmunire, that is, "the "offender shall be out of the king's protection, and his or her "lands and tenements, good and chattels, forfeited to the "king: and his or her body shall remain in prison at the king's "pleasure."—The punishment for the offence in *persons of an inferior order*, if not pilloried or whipped, is (without any consideration of what their substance may be) £50, and one year's imprisonment, and for the second offence they are subject to the penalties of a person attainted of a præmunire.—So far as to involuntary, now as to voluntary informers. If the punishment of the offender be a fine, the law entitles them to one half of the same.

"The only exception to this law is, a licence from the lord lieutenant and privy council to keep such arms as shall be particularly expressed in the licence—This possibility of a privilege is by its own nature so remote, on account of the difficulty of application in private cases to the supreme executive authority, that we do not believe, that there are ten persons now in the kingdom who have been fortunate enough to obtain it.

EXERCISE OF RELIGION.

"We will now say something concerning the exercise of religion.

"All inhabitants of this realm must attend divine service according to the established religion at their parish church upon Sunday and holiday, upon pain of ecclesiastical censures, and of forfeiting 12d. for every time of absence.

"All

"All superstitious meetings and assemblies of pilgrims at wells and pretended sanctified places are declared riots and unlawful assemblies, and punishable as such.

"Magistrates are to demolish all crosses, pictures and inscriptions that are any where publicly set up, and are the occasion of popish superstitions.

"None shall bury in suppressed monastery, abbey or convent not used for divine service, or within the precincts thereof, upon pain of £10 from any person present, by order of a justice of peace.

"Justices of peace are to suppress all monasteries, friaries, nunneries or other popish fraternities or societies.

"A popish *secular* ecclesiastic, who registers himself pursuant to the act for that purpose, and takes and subscribes the oath and declaration prescribed by the 13th and 14th Geo. 3. ch. 35, and also a popish *regular* ecclesiastic, if he be in the kingdom at the passing of the 21st and 22d Geo. 3. ch. 24, and makes the oath and declaration aforesaid, and registers himself pursuant to the act for that purpose in six months after the passing the said act of the 21st and 22d Geo. 3. ch. 24, are authorized to officiate, provided they do not officiate in any church or chapel with a steeple or bell, or at any funeral in any church-yard, or exercise any of the rites or ceremonies of the popish religion, or wear the habits of their order, (save within their several places of worship or in private houses) or shall use any symbol or mark of ecclesiastical dignity or authority, or assume or take any ecclesiastical rank or title, or procure, incite or persuade any protestant to become a papist.

"All popish *regular* and *secular* ecclesiastics, not qualifying as above, or offending against any of the aforementioned provi-

sions,

sions, and all papists exercising ecclesiastical jurisdiction are to be imprisoned till they be transported beyond seas, and if they should return from exile, they will thereby be guilty of high treason and suffer and forfeit as in case of high treason—and whoever harbours them shall for the first offence forfeit £20, for the second offence £40, and for the third offence all his lands of inheritance and freehold during his life, and all his goods and chattels.

"Every popish priest who becomes a protestant shall receive £40 yearly from the county in which he last officiated as a Roman priest during his residence in said county until he shall be provided for by some ecclesiastical benefice or licensed curacy of the same or greater value.

"If any person shall seduce a protestant to renounce the protestant and profess the popish religion, the seducer and the seduced shall incur the penalty of præmunire mentioned in he 16th Rich. 2.*

ENJOYMENT AND DISPOSITION OF PROPERTY.

"The popery penal law in respect to *real estates* and *chattels real*, has been in a great measure done away, and at this day, papists, upon taking the oath and subscribing the declaration mentioned in the 13th and 14th Geo. 3. ch. 35, in the manner and at the times and places prescribed by law, are *qualified* to enjoy and acquire *real estates* and *chattels real* nearly as fully and beneficially as other subjects may.

However

* 16th Rich. 2. ch. 5. That is, they "shall be put out of the King's protection, their lands and goods forfeited to the king's use, and they shall be attached by their bodies to answer to the king and his council."

" However there are some disabilities still remaining.

" Papists are disabled to *buy* or *purchase* any *advowson*—And the *right of presentation* of a papist to any ecclesiastical benefice is vested in the crown.

" Papists, making as aforesaid the oath and declaration mentioned in the 13th and 14th Geo. 3. ch. 35, may take, hold and enjoy any lands, tenements or hereditaments in any *manor* or *borough*, the freeholders or inhabitants whereof are entitled to vote for burgesses to represent such manor or borough in parliament, which shall descend from or be devised or transferred by a *papist* seised in fee, or tail, in law, or in equity, of the same at the passing of the 17th and 18th Geo. 3. ch. 49, or person deriving from a *papist then* so seised.

" If any *protestant* is seised of any lands, tenements or hereditaments in *such manor* or *borough*, no papist is capable of taking the same by reason of any *descent*, *devise*, or *gift*, from such *protestant*, but the law vests the same, until his conformity, in the next protestant of the inheritable blood.

" Papists, upon making as aforesaid the oath and declaration before mentioned, are not disabled from taking any *lease* in lands, tenements, or hereditaments in any *such manor* or *borough* for *any term of years not exceeding* 999 *years certain, or for any term of years determinable on any number of lives not exceeding five*, with or without liberty of committing waste, and disposing of the same by will or otherwise, as fully and beneficially to all intents and purposes as any other his majesty's subjects may, save that upon every such lease a rent bonâ fide to be paid in money shall be reserved, and save that a *maintenance* and *portion* may be granted thereout to any child of a popish parent possessed of the same upon a bill filed against such parent in chancery pursuant to the 2d Anne, ch. 6, which enacts, " that

" upon

" upon a bill filed in chancery by a child of a popish parent, " professing or desirous to profess the protestant religion, " against such parent, that court may make such order for the " *maintenance* of such child, not maintained by such parent " suitable to the degree and ability of such parent and age of " such child, and *also* for the *portion* of such child, *to be paid* " *at the death of such parent* as the court shall judge fit, suitable " to the degree and ability of such parent."

" But if any papist *buys* or *purchases* lands, tenements or hereditaments, or in *such manor* or *borough* from any *protestant*, or any leases or terms thereof, other than for the beforementioned term of 999* years or other number of years determinable on five lives, *such* lands, tenements and hereditaments, so conveyed or leased, and all collateral securities made or entered into to cover or make good the same are discoverable, and may be sued for and recovered by a protestant discoverer.

" This discoverer so vested with this property is enabled to find it out by every mode of inquisition, and to sue for it with every kind of privilege, not only the courts of law are open to him, but he may enter, and this is the usual method, into either of the courts of equity; he may bring bills against the parties, whom he suspects to be possessed of this forbidden property, against those whom he suspects to be their trustees, and against those whom he suspects to be privy to the transaction, and oblige them, upon oath, under the guilt and penalties of perjury, to disclose the exact nature, and just value of their estates and trusts in all the particulars, in order to effect their forfeiture.—In such suits, the informer is not liable to the delays which the ordinary procedure of those courts throws into the way of the most equitable claimant, nor has the papist the indulgence

* A lease for a term of years is not a freehold, and does not confer the right of suffrage.

indulgence which they allow to the most fraudulent defendant, that of plea and demurrer; the defendant is obliged to *answer* the whole directly upon oath, and the old rule of "extending benefit and restraining penalty" is by this law struck out of the Irish jurisprudence, and the contrary rule is established, directing that, upon all doubts these penal laws should be construed in the largest and the most liberal sense against the defendant.

"Until the 2d May, 1782, papists were incapable to purchase from *protestant or papist, any rents or profits out of, or annuity chargeable on any lands, tenements or hereditaments*, and at this day no papist is capable to buy or purchase from *protestant* or *papist* any *rents or profits* out of lands, tenements or hereditaments in *such manor* or *borough*, or take any *annuity*, chargeable on *such lands, tenements or hereditaments*;—and all securities whatsoever for the securing of any *such annuity* are void, and any judgment had on such annuity, so far as such judgment may effect *such* lands, is also void.

"In respect to the leases taken by papists under the powers granted by the 17th and 18th Geo. 3. ch. 40, it is to be observed, that those leases, if taken at any time within the first August and first November, 1778, were liable to be charged with maintenance and portion for the children of a popish parent possessed of the same, if a bill grounded on the 2d Anne, ch. 6, was filed for that purpose before the 1st November, 1778; but if no such bill was filed before the 1st November, 1778, such leases so previously taken and in the actual possession of the papist on that day, ceased to be liable to such charges. It must also be observed as to those leases taken by papists under the powers granted by the 17th and 18th Geo. 3, ch. 49, that if taken at any time after the 1st November, 1778, and before the 2d May, 1782, (or since, if of lands in such before mentioned manors or boroughs) they were and do now continue to

be liable to be charged with such maintenance and portion—As to leases of any lands, tenements, or hereditaments, (save in such before mentioned manors or boroughs) taken by papists after the 1st May, 1782, they are within the provision of the statute of the 21st and 22d Geo. 3. ch. 24, "which enables papists, upon making as aforesaid the oath and declaration before mentioned, to take and dispose of lands, tenements and hereditaments, and any interest therein as fully and beneficially as other subjects may," and are, therefore, not liable to such charges.

"To conclude our observations on the subject of *real* property, we have only to take notice, that the law directs that *debts and incumbrances* affecting the *real* estates of *papists* shall, within six months, be enrolled in the court of exchequer, in some public office belonging to and appointed by such court for that purpose, and that in default of such enrollment, such debts and incumbrances shall not charge the *lands* in the hands of a *protestant*.—The *auditor-general's office* is the place appointed for that purpose by the court of exchequer.—The intent of this law was to prevent *pocket incumbrances* only—*judgments* are of sufficient notoriety, and, it is decided, that they are not within the view of the legislature, and that copies of them need not be enrolled in the auditor-general's office.

ACQUISITION OF PROPERTY.

Whatever effect the relaxing laws may have had upon *real estates* and *chattels real*, the *goods* and *personal chattels* have not been effected by those laws in any respect, save that no maintenance or portion can be granted out of such property to any child of a popish parent upon a bill filed against such parent pursuant to the 2d *Anne, ch.* 6; in other respects, the penalties of the

the law affecting such property, remain as they did before the relaxing laws were passed.

"If the *wife* of a papist conforms in his life time, she shall, if she survives him and be unprovided for by dower or by some settlement on his *real* estate, receive such proportion of the *goods and personal chattels* whereof he shall die possessed or intitled unto as the court of chancery, on a bill to be preferred by her, grounded on the *8th Anne, ch.* 3. may think reasonable, not exceeding one *third* part after debts and funeral expences, notwithstanding any will or voluntary disposition by him to the contrary, or the *statute of distributions*.—The legislature, in this instance, has presumed that the husband omitted to make provision, for no other reason than that of her religion.—If, therefore, a wife chooses to balance any domestic misdemeanors to her husband by the public merit of conformity to the protestant religion, the law will suffer no proofs of such misdemeanors to be brought to invalidate its presumption; she acquires a provision totally independent of the favour of her husband, and this in a great degree deprives him of that source of domestic authority which the common law has left in families, that of rewarding or punishing, by a voluntary distribution of his effects, what in the opinion of the husband was the good or ill behaviour of his wife. And yet it is to be observed that though the law meant a favour to the conforming wife, yet by a strange inaccuracy, in repealing as to her the provisions of the *statute of distributions*, it has deprived her of an advantage to which she would have been intitled under that statute in case her husband died intestate and without issue; as in such case, by that statute she would be intitled, as against his collateral relations, to a *moiety* of the clear surplus of his *personal* estate, after payment of debts and funeral expences.

"The *child* of a papist, on conforming to the protestant religion, may file a bill in chancery, grounded on the statute of the

8th Anne, ch. 3, against the parent, and compel such parent, by the process of that court, to confess, upon oath, the quantity and value of the *goods and personal chattels* of such parent over and above debts contracted bonâ fide for valuable consideration before the conformity.—Upon this conformity, the court is empowered to seize upon and allocate for the *immediate maintenance* of such child, any sum not exceeding one *third* of the said *goods* and *personal chattels*.—This *third*, as we said, for *immediate maintenance*, but as to *future establishment* upon the death of the parent, no limits whatsoever are assigned by the statute; the chancellor may, if he thinks fit, take the whole of such property, money, stock in trade or agriculture, out of the hands of the possessor, and secure it in any manner he may think expedient for that purpose, the act not having any sort of limit with regard to the quantity of such property which is to be so charged, nor having given any sort of direction concerning the means of charging or securing it.—But the policy of the legislature was not yet exhausted, because there was a possibility that the parent, though sworn and otherwise compellable, might by *false representations* evade the discovery of the ultimate value of *such* property on the *first* bill; *new* bills may be brought at any time, by any, or by all the children for a further discovery.—*Such* property of the parent is to undergo a fresh scrutiny, and in consequence of this scrutiny a new distribution is to be made; the parent can have no security against the vexation of reiterated chancery suits, and continual dissection of *such* his property, but by doing what must be confessed is somewhat difficult to human feelings, by fully and without reserve abandoning *such* property (which may be his *whole*,) to be disposed of at the discretion of such a court, in favour of such children.—Is this enough, and has the parent purchased his repose by the total surrender for once of *such* effects? Very far from it; the law very expressly and carefully provides that he shall not; for as in the former case, a *concealment* of any part of *such* effects is made the equitable ground of a *new* bill—so here any *encrease* of them is made a second ground of equity; for

for the children are authorised, if they can find that their parent has by his industry or otherwise acquired any property since their first bill, to bring others compelling a fresh account, and another distribution of the encreased substance proportioned to its value at the time that the new bill is preferred.—They may bring such bills toties quoties, upon every improvement of *such* property by the parent, without any sort of limitation of time, of the number of such bills, or the quantity of encrease in the estate which may justify the bringing them; in short, the law has provided, by a multiplicity of regulations, that the parent shall have no respite from the persecution of his children, but by totally abandoning not only all his present *goods and personal chattels*, but every hope of encrease and improvement of *such* property.—It is very well worth remarking, that the law has purposely avoided to determine any age for these emancipating conversions, so that the children at any age, however in all other respects incapable of choice, however immature, or even infantine, are yet considered as sufficiently capable of disinheriting their parents, if we may be allowed the expression, and to subtract themselves from their direction and controul. By this part of the law, the value of Roman Catholics in their *goods and personal chattels* is rendered extremely limited and altogether precarious, the paternal authority in such families undermined, and love and gratitude, dependence and protection, almost extinguished.

FRANCHISES.

"There only remains upon our plan, to say something concerning *franchises*.

"No person shall hold any *ecclesiastical office* or *employment* without making a *declaration* against *transubstantiation* at the times and places, and in the manner prescribed by the law.

"No

" No person, without making a *declaration* against *transubstantiation* and *receiving the sacrament according to the Church of Ireland* at the times and places and in the manner prescribed by the law, shall hold any *office* or *employment*, *civil* or *military*, except the office of high constable, overseer of the poor, church-warden, surveyor of the highways, or any like inferior civil office, or the office of forester or keeper of a park, chase, warren, game, or bailiff of a manor or lands, or any like private office.—The office or employment is void, and the penalty for executing it a disability to sue in law or equity, to be guardian, executor or administrator, to take a legacy or deed of gift, or to bear any office, and a forfeiture of £500.

" *Papists* are not entitled to *vote* at *vestries*, (held for other purposes than *paving and lighting*) unless they happen to be the church-wardens, in which case they vote, except for the *repairing and rebuilding of churches*.

" *Papists* are not to be *parochial watchmen* in times of *tumult and danger*—the lord lieutenant, the judge of such times, may, when he shall judge necessary, issue proclamations for the finding of protestants, and none other, to be parochial watch.

" Though *papists* may, by taking and subscribing the oath of allegiance prescribed by the 13th and 14th Geo. 3. ch. 35. *qualify* to be called to the bar, yet they are expressly excluded from being *king's council*.

" And though *papists* may in like manner qualify to be *attorney*, *solicitor*, or *notary*, yet to be an *advocate*, *proctor*, or *six clerk*, the necessity of a *declaration* against *transubstantiation* still remains.

" No person shall be capable of acting as a *sub-sheriff* or *sheriff's clerk*, who has not been a *protestant* for *five years* immediately

diately before such acting, under penalty of being subject to such disabilities as papists are.

" No *peer*, or *member of the house of peers*, shall vote or make his proxy in such house, or sit there during any debate, nor shall *any member of the house of commons* vote or sit in the house of commons during any debate after the speaker is chosen, until such peer or member shall take and subscribe the *declaration* against *transubstantiation*. The penalty is a disability to hold or execute any office ecclesiastical, civil or military, to sit or vote in either house of parliament, or make a proxy in the house of lords, to sue in law or equity, to be guardian, executor, or administator, or to take any legacy or deed of gift, and a forfeiture of £500.

" No *papist* is intitled to vote at the *election of any member to serve in parliament*, or at the *election of any magistrate for any city or other town corporate*.

" No *papist* shall serve on, or be returned to serve on, any *grand jury*, unless it shall appear to the court, that a sufficient number of protestants cannot be had for that service.

" In *all trials of issues* on any of the *popery laws*, the *prosecutor or plaintiff* may *challenge* any *papist* returned as juror to try the same.

" And in *actions between protestants and papists*, *challenge* of a *papist* returned as a juror, shall be allowed.

" No *papist* shall serve as a *juror* upon trials for *enlisting persons in foreign service*.

" *Papists* to serve on *juries* must have £10 per annum, clear freehold, except in counties of cities and towns.

" *King's*

" *King's and university professorships of physic* are not open to *papists.*

" Persons *apprenticed*, under the direction of *authorized establishments for education*, are invariably to be apprenticed to *protestants.*

" No *six clerk*, *officer or deputy officer* of any of the four courts, or of any court of record, ecclesiastical or admiralty, shall take any *papist* to be *apprentice or clerk.*

" The reader has now before him such a view of the popery laws of Ireland as may enable him to form some sort of judgment upon the spirit of the whole system."

OATH OF ALLEGIANCE

AND DECLARATION.

13th and 14th GEO. 3. *ch.* 35, *sec.* 1.

" I, *A. B.* do take Almighty God and his only son Jesus Christ my redemer, to witness, that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to our most gracious sovereign lord King George the Third, and him will defend, to the utmost of my power, against all conspiracies and attempts whatsoever that shall be made against his person, crown and dignity; and I will do my utmost endeavour to disclose and make known to his majesty, and his heirs, all treasons and traitorous conspiracies which may be

be formed against him or them; and I do faithfully promise to maintain, support and defend, to the utmost of my power, the succession of the crown in his majesty's family against any person or persons whatsoever, hereby utterly renouncing and abjuring any obedience or allegiance unto the person taking upon himself the stile and title of Prince of Wales in the life-time of his father, and who since his death is said to have assumed the stile and title of King of Great Britain and Ireland, by the name of Charles the Third, and to any other person claiming or pretending a right to the crown of these realms; and I do swear, that I do reject and detest, as unchristian and unpious to believe, that it is lawful to murder or destroy any person or persons whatsoever for or under pretence of their being heretics, and also that unchristian and impious principle, that no faith is to be kept with hereticks; I further declare, that it is no article of my faith, and that I do renounce, reject and abjure the opinion, that princes excommunicated by the pope and council, or by any authority of the see of Rome, or by any authority whatsoever, may be deposed and murdered by their subjects, or by any person whatsoever; and I do promise, that I will not hold, maintain or abet any such opinion, or any other opinion contrary to what is expressed in this declaration; and I do declare, that I do not believe that the pope of Rome, or any other foreign prince, prelate, state or potentate, hath, or ought to have any temporal or civil jurisdiction, power, superiority or pre-eminence, directly or indirectly, within this realm; and I do solemnly, in the presence of God, and of his only son Jesus Christ my Redeemer, profess, testify and declare, that I do make this declaration, and every part thereof, in the plain and ordinary sense of the word of this oath, without any evasion whatsoever, and without any dispensation already granted by the pope, or any authority of the see of Rome, or any person whatever, and without thinking that I am or can be acquitted before God or man, or absolved of this declaration, or any part thereof, although the pope or any other person or persons or authority whatsoever shall

dispense with or annul the same, or declare that it was null and void from the beginning.

"So help me God."

AN ACCOUNT

OF THE TREATY BETWEEN THE UNITED IRISHMEN AND THE ANGLO-IRISH GOVERNMENT, IN 1798,

BY W. J. MAC NEVEN.

THE object of the United Irishmen was at first like that of the Americans, a redress of grievances. When not only that redress was refused, but they who demanded it, were subjected to persecution; instead of desisting with the submissive resignation of slaves, they manfully arraigned the injustice of their oppressors, enlarged their views, and sought for independence.—When compelled to pay the largest price that a nation can give for its happiness, they were not such pusillanimous fools as to content themselves with a condition which would not afford a reasonable expectation of, for ever excluding the return of their calamities. A reform in the commons house of parliament, comprehending the emancipation of the catholics, was what the United Irishmen earnestly desired; but when they found the whole force of English influence exerted to defeat their object, they easily perceived, that the master grievance of their country, was its dependance on England. Then, and not before, they resolved to sever the enslaving connection.

The

The English cabinet on their side, judged that the moment was now arrived for bringing that treason to issue, which Lord Clare, according to his own confession,* had been plotting during several years, for annihilating the parliament of Ireland, and vesting the whole dominion of the country in a foreign legislature.

Joined with him in this conspiracy were some others, and in the number Lord Castlereagh; all of whom, with cold-blooded artifice, stirred up an insurrection that was to supply the necessary pretext for effecting their nefarious design.

In former times resort was had to similar acts of outrage, for the purpose of driving the natives into a resistance that should be followed by a forfeiture of their estates: Now, a rebellion was intentionally produced by the chief agents of the British ministry, in order to give an opportunity for confiscating the whole political power, and the independent character of the country, by an act of union.

The confidential friends of the British government were known to boast of having plunged the nation into this scene of horrors. Nor was the executive committee of the union unacquainted with the intention of reducing Ireland to depend on the will of a foreign power,† and that power an ambitious rival. They exerted themselves therefore, and for some time with effect, in restraining the impatience of their irritated countrymen. Although a recourse to arms might become necessary for the attainment of

* In debates in the Irish house of lords on the Union.

† So little was the policy of the British cabinet on this subject, a secret even out of Ireland, that the director *Carnot* told Dr. Mac Neven, in August, 1798, that a union was Mr. Pitt's object in his vexatious treatment of Ireland, and that it behoved the United Irishmen to be aware of his schemes.

one of their objects—separation, yet this itself was contemplated by them as the alternative only, of an unrelenting refusal to reform; and the executive in that, the last extremity, wished through the co-operation of a respectable French force, to exclude the barbarity of a purely civil war. This, when excited by the provocations daily given to it, was the convulsive effort of despair; and but for the systematic atrocities of the conspirators against the legislative independence of Ireland, no *civil war* would have occurred there to the present moment. We have the authority of the American congress, that the colonies were driven designedly into resistance, for the purpose of giving an opportunity to impose on them a standing army, illegal taxes, and to establish among them a system of despotism. This arbitrary project, after miscarrying in America, was transferred by the same monarch to Ireland, and unhappily succeeded there. Before assistance could be obtained against his schemes, from the natural ally of his persecuted subjects, an enlarged scope was given to the intolerable practice of house-burnings, free quarters, tortures, and summary executions, which, as the ministry intended, exploded in rebellion. After this manner they facilitated the union; but neither the recollection of the means, nor the nature of the measure, could have any other effect than to strengthen the desire of separation.

When the contest began, its vigour greatly exceeded the calculations of those who provoked it. For some time it carried with it the justest terrors: and partial as it was, it almost shook the government to its centre. Of the progress of this insurrection, of the valour it developed, or of its unfortunate issue, I shall not speak at present. Let me, however, observe, that the prowess manifested by men untutored in scenes of death, except by their own sufferings, has convinced every thinking mind, that if they had then received even the small co-operation which arrived too late under *Humbert*, or if they had been possessed of more military skill, and military stores, their success would have been

been certain. But at the end of two months from the commencement of the insurrection, the enemy had acquired a decided superiority, in consequence of being incomparably better provided with the means of warfare. Most of the insurgent chiefs had fallen or surrendered, their forces had capitulated or were dispersed. Before the 22d of July, the actions of New Ross, Arklow, and Vinegar Hill, were lost. Messrs. Aylmer and Fitzgerald, with the remaining forces in the county of Kildare, had entered into military conditions, and no force remained in the field but a very inconsiderable body in the mountains of Wicklow.

At this time, without any concert with those individuals who were afterwards employed to negotiate on behalf of the state prisoners, and even without their knowledge, a plan was set on foot for rescuing the country from the vindictive massacre of its defeated inhabitants. Persons not at all implicated in the insurrection had taken up the measure, and the old lord Charlemont was represented to the state prisoners as desirous of being useful in procuring a retreat from all persecution for the past.—Though too infirm to be an active agent between them and the government, he would undertake, it was alledged, to obtain a satisfactory guarantee of whatever terms might be settled. Accordingly, Mr. Francis Dobbs, one of the members in parliament for his borough, prompted as well by innate philantrophy as by the patriotic wishes of his noble friend, went round, with the permission of government, accompanied by one of the high sheriffs, to the different prisoners, and obtained the assent of most of them to an agreement of a somewhat similar import with that which was afterwards concluded. In this visit, he publicly assured his hearers, that the scope and object of his mission was to procure a most important advantage for the country at large; to put a stop to further carnage, and to terminate, without the infliction of more calamity, an insurrection which had failed.

It

It became manifest to the state prisoners themselves, that present success was hopeless, and that the United Irishmen could not then struggle through the surrounding defeats to the independence and prosperity of their native land. The Anglo-Irish government had found a profligate informer, who, by false pretensions to principle, obtained the confidence of the gallant and unsuspicious Lord Edward Fitzgerald. The ruffian, of the name of Reynolds, became acquainted with some of the executive, and with the proceedings of the Leinster provincial committee, to which he had been elected through the influence of the friend and patron whom he afterwards betrayed, and whose family he reduced, through confiscations, to poverty. He thus enabled government in the preceding March to arrest some of the persons then most efficient in the United Irish organization. There was an interruption of all system since those arrests, and no one had yet appeared sufficiently capable of filling the chasm which that misfortune left in the direction of the Union. The arrest and death of Lord Edward himself in the month of May, had drawn after them a train of disastrous consequences, that were at that time perhaps irreparable. The loss subsequently sustained of other energetic patriots, who were prepared to second his exertions, occasioned the failure of his well-concerted plans. The Irish nation could not sustain a greater misfortune in the person of any one individual, than befell it in the loss of Fitzgerald at that critical moment. Even his enemies, and he had none but those of his country, allowed him to possess distinguished military talents. With these, with unquestioned intrepidity, republicanism, and devotion to Ireland, with popularity that gave him unbounded influence, and integrity that made him worthy of the highest trust; had he been present in the Irish camp to organize discipline, and give to the valour of his country a scientific direction, we should have seen the slaves of monarchy fly before the republicans of Ireland, as they did before the patriots of America. And if at last the tears of his countrymen,

trymen had been constrained to lament his fate, they would have been received on the laurels of his tomb.

In the midst of these heart-rending misfortunes, the unresisted wreaking of implacable animosity, hitherto somewhat suspended through fear, began to rage in all the revengeful wantonness of security. The military, the orangemen, the magistrates, glutted their bigoted fury or personal hatred with the blood of United Irishmen, and still they seemed to be insatiable. The riding-house of Mr. Claudius Beresford daily witnessed the torture of flagellation, while that zealous supporter of British supremacy presided himself at the execution; and, as often as the instrument became too much clogged with the flesh of the sufferer, he was seen to pick the chords of the cat-o'-nine-tails, that they might lacerate with deeper loyalty. Even children were sometimes scourged, sometimes immersed to the lips in water, to extort information from them against their parents, and concealment was punished with death. The privacy of families was insecure; the delicacy of females was not respected. Every where you beheld a spectacle of atrocities, or a melancholy gloom. Acquaintances and friends passed each other with averted eyes, and the stillness of terror was interrupted only by the march of military cut-throats, the processions of executions, and the savage orgies of orangemen, maddened with ebriety, and fierce from bloodshed.

At the same time that the military tribunals were cutting down the most virtuous citizens in every quarter, the ordinary criminal courts were dooming to death, by the help of furious and malignant orange juries, those of the United Irishmen against whom the least evidence to go to a jury could be had.—The vilest beings, informers and malefactors, were able, with a dreadful facility, to sacrifice in these courts, I will not say of justice, but at the bar of fanaticism and phrenzy, the most upright men, who were led successively to certain death, passing through

through the forms of trial only to afford a more solemn festival to the enemies of Irish liberty. The blood that would be shed on the scaffold and in the field, it was now certain, could produce no other effect, than displaying the determined valour and undeviating integrity of those who suffered for the common cause.—If the union were prevented from exhausting itself in such an unequal contest, it might still be formidable to its enemies; perhaps more formidable than ever, in consequence of the courage and fidelity it had manifested.

What then was the best service that remained for prudence or virtue to perform? To stop the ensuing horrors, to save the country from the cold-blooded slaughter of its best, its bravest, its most enlightened defenders; to prevent those calamities that are consequent on an unsuccessful civil contest, and that frequently render a future effort impracticable.

There was something even in the passing moment to incite to an attempt at such a compromise as would secure those benefits. Lord Cornwallis had just entered upon the government of Ireland, and declared himself inclined to justice and conciliation.—He was violently opposed by the orange faction in the cabinet; and from a motive which he did not then disclose, but which subsequent events have shewn to be the projected union of the two countries, he wished to make a merit with those who had suffered most from the British government, by teaching them to throw the severity of their sufferings on their own villainous parliament and merciless countrymen. Good policy required from the United Irishmen that they should avail themselves of his avowed disposition. A feint, but in the end an illusive hope, was conceived, that as he was, in some measure, at war with their old oppressors, if a fair statement of the objects and motives of the United Irishmen were laid before him; if the precipice, on the brink of which his majesty's ministers had been madly walking, were pointed out to him; he would be convinced of what

is

is truly the fact, that Ireland cannot be retained in the bonds of British connexion, without adopting comprehensive measures of reform, and speedily removing the discontents that produced her alliance with France.

To such considerations was superadded a most anxious wish to preserve the lives of Michael William Byrne and Oliver Bond. They who knew those excellent men, will not say that the state prisoners violated the brotherhood of affection to which they had sworn, by an effort to restore them to their families and to society; especially when no return whatever was made for those manifold advantages, that it would be of the smallest importance, in that advanced season of the affairs of the union, to withhold even from its enemies. Alas! that effort was vain; a stroke of apoplexy snatched Bond from his friends, after they had rescued him, as they thought, from the grave. Against Byrne, the rancour of party and the thirst of blood prevailed—He was executed.

Mr. Byrne was one of the first families of the country, and among his relatives had many friends, who, without his knowledge, exerted their interest to preserve his life. They were told that if he would express regret at being an United Irishman, and declare that he was seduced by Lord Edward Fitzgerald, he should be forgiven. When this proposal was made known to him, he spurned at it with abhorrence. He declared that he had no regret but that of not leaving his country free; that he was never seduced to be an United Irishman, and least of all by that hallowed character, whose memory they wished to traduce. Perhaps, said he, they intend to rob his children of his inheritance; but my existence shall never be disgraced by giving sanction to so base a design. This young man having a strong sense of religion, received its rites with a cheerful hope and an assured conscience—expressing the greatest consolation at quitting life in his perfect senses, with leasure for previous pre-

paration, and in so virtuous a cause. His very adversaries were forced to admire and do homage to that cause which produced such martyrs. So complete was the self-possession and delicacy of his mind, that in passing to the scaffold by the window of Mr. Bond's apartment, where Mrs. Bond was then with her husband, he stooped so low as not to be seen by her, lest he should alarm the feelings of a wife and a mother at that moment trembling for all that she held dear.

If the repetition of things that are become familiar by use could astonish, the demeanour and fortitude of that young man, from his condemnation to his execution, might be truly called astonishing. He was not only undaunted and unmoved, but he was collected, cheerful and happy. He had hazarded his life in a good cause, and was determined, by publicly manifesting the enthusiasm with which he would die, to give resolution to the timid, and constancy to the brave. Fortified by the examples of those who mounted the scaffold before him, he went, perhaps, to the utmost bounds of magnanimity, and put it out of the power of those who followed, to surpass him.

Mr. Bond, though an United Irishman, was certainly not one within the personal knowledge of his prosecutor Reynolds, who, in almost every thing he advanced respecting that gentleman, swore falsely. But Mr. Bond was highly beloved by the friends of Irish independence, and equally hateful to its enemies. He was one of the earliest in planning and promoting the union of Irishmen. He possessed a force of understanding, an elevation of soul, and an integrity of heart, that placed him in the first rank of patriots. His feelings were truly Irish, his principles, those of an enlightened republican. His character had fully established itself in the esteem of his countrymen, and will be honoured by them when the guilty triumph of his oppressors shall have passed away, or be remembered only to be abhorred.

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The mode in which Byrne and his predecessors met their fate, must have taught the government, that altho' they could immolate more victims, they would not thereby lessen the general indignation, exasperated by such losses, and strengthened by such examples. On this account, perhaps, Bond was respited from Friday the 27th of July, until the Monday following; for Mr. Bond likewise had passed before the sitting commission of oyer and terminer, where the juries were infuriate Orangemen, and where such an extension was given to the law of treason, as to embrace the population of the land.

In the interval, Mr. Secretary Cook had an interview with him and Mr. Neilson in the prison of Newgate, to know if, notwithstanding the execution of Mr. Byrne, the state prisoners would renew the negociation. These again consented as far as they could; for notwithstanding the loss of one revered associate, it did not become them, they thought, to abandon many other valuable lives, and the safety of their brethren at large. In consequence of this second assent, Mr. Cook visited the prisons. When he came to Kilmainham, Dr. Mac Neven from a mistrust of the man, and of all the subordinate agents of government, informed the Secretary, that until the terms were formally ratified by Lord Cornwallis, his lips should remain sealed. On Mr. Cook's retiring, he consulted with his fellow-prisoners, Emmet and Sweetman, about the propriety of desiring a conference with the minister, Lord Castlereagh. His friends agreeing with him in opinion, he wrote a note to Mr. Cook to that effect.

Whether ministers found that what had been hitherto the basis of the treaty was not sufficiently extensive for their purpose, or from what other cause, is unknown; but Mr. Dobbs again visited the prisoners, with a letter which had been addressed to him by Mr. Cook, stating that some mistake had taken place in the terms, without specifying what that mistake was, and containing a *new proposal* of giving up names, on a

promise from government that the persons so mentioned should not in any event be prosecuted capitally; and also that the prisoners should consent to emigrate to such country *as to his majesty should seem meet.* The letter likewise stated, that unless the information communicated by the prisoners should be important, government would not consider itself bound by the agreement. These new terms were inadmissible, and were unanimously rejected. At the same time, it was manifest that if any thing could be effected, it must be done by directly treating with the head of the government. For this purpose the prisoners, after some intercourse permitted and had between the different prisons, unanimously appointed as agents to negotiate on their behalf, Messrs. Emmet, O'Connor and Mac Neven. Lest there should be any indelicate appearance towards Lord Castlereagh, Mr. Dobbs was requested to communicate to his lordship the wish of the prisoners, that their deputies should have liberty to wait on Lord Cornwallis, or on him. The next morning, July the 29th, they were sent for to the castle of Dublin, where they had an interview with his Lordship, the Chancellor Lord Clare, and Mr. Secretary Cook. The discussion between those ministers and the deputies turned on the following points:

1st. Lord Castlereagh revived to the deputies the proposal of disclosing the names of their associates; but would engage that they should be exempted from prosecution. It was observed to him that, if he meant to press this condition, it was needless to proceed, that there could be no treaty with such a clause; on which it was entirely dismissed.

The second point related to the confidence to be placed in each other's engagements. When the deputies expressed doubts as to the execution of the agreement on the side of the government, since their part of it must be first performed, "Gentlemen," said the Lord Chancellor, "it comes to this—ye must trust to us, or we must trust to you: but a government that would

would break its faith with you, could not stand, and ought not to be allowed to stand."—The government did afterwards break its faith, and incurred the Chancellor's sentence. At last it was settled as a matter of sacred honour to act on both sides with good faith, and up to the spirit of the compact. Agreeably to the principles which led the deputies to negotiate, they insisted, in the next place, on a general amnesty for all that had been done on account of the Union. The ministers, on their part, would not consent to make this a specific article, lest, as they said, the people should thank the deputies of the United Irishmen for it, and not the administration. But as on this point principally turned the negotiation, they gave the deputies the most solemn assurance, that it was the intention of government, if enabled so to do by its agreement with them, to let no more blood be shed, except in cases of deliberate murder, or conspiracy to murder. It was answered, that there was no wish to stipulate for persons coming properly under that description, provided that in it were not included those who had killed others only in the field of battle. In this sense, and with only the exception of deliberate murderers, if any such there were, the article was concluded. As the deputies had now secured all that was essential, they were content to leave to the ministry the popularity of the measure, especially as that was an advantage which it seemed eager to appropriate to itself.

The fourth point of discussion was the equivalent to be given to government. The deputies urged that the importance of their communications could only be judged of by the extent of what was already known; but that the state prisoners would not consent to place themselves in the power of government, unless it were first well ascertained, that on their acting with good faith, the objects they had so much at heart would be completely secured. They requested, therefore, to have explained to them what in this case was meant by importance. After some conversation, they were told that it would be considered of

importance

importance *to give their authority for the alliance of the United Irishmen with France, the details of which the king's ministers well knew, but from such sources as they must keep secret;* and that it would be important for them to be able to separate the true from the false of what they had already heard.

As to the prisoners going to such country as should be pointed out, this also was peremptorily refused. Upon which, Lord Castlereagh said his exception was against those countries alone that were at war with England, or under the influence of France; but both parties agreed upon the United States of America.

The ministers, in the strongest manner, pledged Lord Cornwallis's administration to the utmost liberality in carrying the terms of the agreement into effect, and an immediate compliance was so fully expected, that a promise was obtained of giving the prisoners sufficient time for settling their affairs, before they were required to leave the country.

When it was proposed to make a draught of these stipulations, Lord Castlereagh laboured to produce a persuasion of its being superfluous, since every thing was so well understood, and would be honourably construed. The deputies, however, thought it their duty to commit the substance, at least to writing; and drew up a paper, which must be considered a memorandum, and not a detail of the agreement—but containing a plain reference to the most important article of the general amnesty, which, notwithstanding all the promises of the ministry, they could not suffer to remain altogether a secret one. The following is that paper:

"That the undersigned state prisoners in the three prisons of Newgate, Kilmainham and Bridewell, engage to give every information in their power of the whole of the internal transactions

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tions of the United Irishmen; and that each of the prisoners shall give detailed information of every transaction that has passed between the United Irishmen and foreign states: but that the prisoners are not, by naming or describing, to implicate any person whatever; and that they are ready to emigrate to such country as shall be agreed on between them and government, and give security not to return to this country without the permission of government, and not to pass into an enemy's country—if, on doing this, they are to be freed from prosecution, and also Mr. Oliver Bond be permitted to take the benefit of this proposal.

"The state-prisoners also hope that the benefit of this proposal may be extended to such persons in custody, or not in custody, as may chuse to benefit by it."

The deputies made the first sketch of this paper, containing the matters they had previously discussed, as far as the ministers had consented to the same. The Chancellor and Lord Castlereagh revised the draught, Mr. Secretary Cook transcribed it, after which he and the deputies interchanged copies. Finally, it was stated by the person who negotiated, that as they were not actuated by personal motives, but were employed for the rest of their fellow-prisoners, they must communicate the agreement to them, and that if it was refused by others, they also would decline signing it. The agreement was accordingly submitted to all the state prisoners in custody in the metropolis—none of whom refused to ratify it.

The necessity of effecting a retreat from an unsuccessful insurrection, first led the United Irishmen to negotiate. The publicity of all their transactions, especially after the insurrection, induced them to accede to the conditions which have been related. There could be no objection against giving every information of the internal transactions and external relations of the Union,

Union, which could be detailed without naming or describing any person whatever, for this simple reason—government was already in possession of it all. They had repeatedly seized United Irish constitutions, and copies of the most material orders the executive had issued. They had obtained very extensive intelligence from all parts of the country, notwithstanding the unparalleled fidelity of the United Irish body, considering that it comprehended almost the active population of the whole nation. Their knowledge of the negotiations of the United Irishmen with foreign states was equally notorious, and at this time one of the deputies had personal evidence of its extent and accuracy. That knowledge was obtained from some person in the pay of England, and in the confidence of France.*

On the 12th of March preceding, after the arrests in Dublin, Mr. Cook told Dr. Mac Neven that government was in possession of a copy of the memoir given by him to the French minister, and he removed, in this instance, all suspicion of his own veracity,

* Mr. Reinhardt, the resident minister of the French republic at Hamburg, when applied to by Dr. Mac Neven for a passport to proceed to Paris, insisted on his orders not to deliver any without the permission of his government, first obtained for every individual case. Though much pressed, he was inflexible; but always offered to transmit a memoir which should detail the object of the mission. This was at last prepared, in despair of proceeding, and as Reinhardt knew the English language, and must at any rate translate the memoir into cipher, it was deemed unnecessary to compose it in French. Two days after it was delivered, Mr. Reinhardt's scruples vanished, and he granted the passport. Mac Néven afterwards saw the deciphered copy of this paper, in French, in Talleyrand's office, where it was kept under the particular key of the chief Secretary. The original, in English, was withdrawn from Reinhardt, and never afterwards entrusted by Mac Neven into any hands bu those of a friend upon whom suspicion could not attach; and independent of the security offered by his character, there is this strong circumstance, that the copy of the memoir which Dr. Mac Neven saw in the hands of Lord Clare, was from the French, and not the English.

veracity, by detailing a great part of its contents. The day following, Dr. Mac Neven was again questioned by the Anglo-Irish privy council concerning the same paper. Of this discovery, he found means to inform several of his friends; and at the period of the negociation, he had the satisfaction of knowing that one of those persons was actually in France, and had, in all probability, already communicated the intelligence to the directory.

Here it is just to quote the words of Lord Clare, the envenomed traducer of the United Irishmen, and of their country. In a debate in the English house of lords on the martial-law bill, in March, 1801, he declared that the United Irishmen who negotiated with the Irish government in 1798, had disclosed nothing with which the king's ministers were not acquainted before.

What, then, it may be asked, did government gain by its agreement? It gained that which the ministers acknowledged was *of importance to them.* It gained the ability of concealing its real channels of intelligence, and of putting the deputies and their associates forward to vouch for what it wished to make known to the world, and could not otherwise venture to authenticate.

The perpetrators of so much tyranny, of house-burning, torture, arbitrary transportation, and licensed murder, thought that they should be able to escape from the infamy of these crimes, by proving against the United Irishmen the design, so often attributed to them, of effecting a separation from England, and establishing a republic. A design which, in the view of the English government and its partizans, would justify, it was known, the violation of every principle, and the infliction of every horror. But the United Irishmen knew they could demonstrate that the persecution of their enemies began in a deliberate hostility to the rights of the people, whose first claims

were preferred even with great reserve; and that it was the despotism with which they were resisted, that in a manner compelled men to open their eyes to the indispensible necessity of political liberty, and to all the rapturous prospects of self-government.

The persons who negotiated were far from declining the opportunity of making every man in the nation meditate on separation, and a republic—and they deemed it an advantage, in the circumstances of the times, to be at liberty to give their country and the world at large an authentic account of their principles and objects; things which, after what had taken place, would be subjects of general inquiry, which the enemies of the Union would be industrious to calumniate, and of which United Irishmen alone would be competent to give a true relation.

The insurrection had precipitated the moment when the utmost publicity was not less favourable, than secrecy had been before, to the designs of the United Irishmen; and in availing themselves of the passing opportunity, it was not their fault if they did not secure other objects of essential importance. Had the conditions of their treaty been as religiously observed as they were solemnly ratified, the persons who carried it through, and these were, properly speaking, the whole of the prisoners, must be acknowledged to have performed for the Union a most useful service. Not a drop of blood was afterwards shed on the score of what had been done in the insurrection or the Union up to that period, but was shed in violation of the compact between them and the government. If public faith or private honor were obligations felt by the Anglo-Irish ministry, vindictive power and lawless violence would, in consequence of that transaction, have been arrested in their career. Perfidiously as every English government had ever acted towards the people of Ireland, it seemed an unwarrantable mistrust to suppose that in no change

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of times or individuals, would this execrable policy be altered. Moreover, such is the dependence of social man on his fellow-creatures, that stipulations and compacts, though often violated, are again forced on us by the necessities of our nature, and every principle of justice revolts at ascribing before-hand to a set of new men, the dishonour of their predecessors. Accordingly, when better prospects had vanished, and the United Irishmen found themselves under the necessity of treating for a general amnesty, they were induced to believe that the engagements which the government thought fit to contract, it would have sufficient honour to perform. This confidence was countenanced by the immediate proceedings of Lord Cornwallis, who authenticated the general object of the treaty by two public acts.—1st. He sent Mr. Dobbs, accompanied by popular and influential United Irishmen, whom he furnished with passes and safe conduct, to the county of Wicklow, where there was still a remnant of insurrection, to make known there the compact, and give the insurgents an opportunity of adopting it. 2dly. General Nugent, commander of the northern district, set forth the agreement in a proclamation which he issued in the month of August, 1798, and called on all those in the north, who might choose to do so, to avail themselves of the conditions.

In performance of their part, a memoir was prepared by the deputies of the prisoners, and delivered to the government on the 4th of August. A couple of days after it had been presented, Mr. Cook came to Messrs. Emmet and Mac Neven at Kilmainham, to say that Lord Cornwallis had read, but could not receive it, unless some passages were expunged, as it was a justification of the United Irishmen. He acknowledged, at the same time, that it was a fulfilment of their engagements—adding, however, that government could not publish it, for if they did, they must hire a person to answer it, to whom, probably, there would be a reply, and thus an endless paper war would be introduced. He was frankly told, that any true account of the

proceedings of the United Irishmen would, in fact, be a justification, and that no alteration could be made in the memoir consistently with character or conscience. Although Mr. Cook said Lord Cornwallis could not receive the memoir, yet he carried it away.

Ministers, judging that their purposes would be better answered by parole examinations, which they might mutilate as they thought fit, and as the Chancellor afterwards declared they would do,* summoned before the secret committees of both houses, some others of the prisoners, as well as the deputies.—The examinations of two of these will be found in the Appendix. They committed them to writing each day on their return, adopting that precaution merely to guard against suppressions on the part of government, but not suspecting at that time the possibility of wilful mistatement. They were anxious to preserve only such answers as they suspected the committees would avoid publishing. This will account for one or two omissions, which they might have supplied by the help of the appendixes to the report of the lords and commons committee; but they prefer leaving their answers as they were written while fresh in their memories, because it is in the reader's power, by comparing them with those appendixes, to ascertain all that was said, the spirit in which it was said, and the candour with which it has been detailed, by both parties.

Thus a number of persons, against whom nothing could have been proved, but who were highly obnoxious to the British government, making common cause with others, who, in consequence of the failure of the insurrection, were defenceless and in danger, offered to remove out of the sphere of injuring that government, provided the spilling of blood should universally cease. Cemented as they all were by political attachment and brotherly

* See examinations of Dr. Mac Neven.

brotherly union, those who were beyond the reach of legal conviction, devoted themselves to make terms for their country. They joined together the safety of some with the danger of others, by a common sacrifice to obtain a national good.

Several perverted accounts of this compact between the prisoners and the government, and of the examinations of the deputies before the committees of parliament, appeared immediately after in the ministerial newspapers. They contained many falsehoods, probably issuing from, and unquestionably not disagreeable to, those who would be ashamed to avow them. In the enslaved state of the Irish press, it was not probable that articles so important would be permitted to meet the public eye, without having been perused, if not written, by some of the confidential servants about the castle. Truth and falsehood were artfully blended, because it was probably perceived that a newspaper misrepresentation could extend more widely than the correction of it in a separate volume.

One most injurious falsehood caused great uneasiness; namely, that the prisoners had disclosed the names of their associates.—Very fortunately they obtained early intelligence of these calumnies, and found means at the same time to contradict them by the following advertisement, which appeared in two of the Dublin newspapers on the 27th of August.

"Having read in the different newspapers, publications pre-
"tending to be abstracts of the report of the secret committee
"of the house of commons, and of our depositions before the
"committees of the lords and commons; we feel ourselves
"called upon to assure the public, that they are gross, and to
"us, astonishing misrepresentations, not only unsupported by,
"but, in many instances, directly contradictory to the facts
"we really stated on those occasions. We further assure our
"friends,

" friends, that in no instance did the name of any individual
" escape from us; on the contrary, we always refused answer-
" ing such questions as might tend to implicate any person what-
" ever, conformably to the agreement entered into by the state
" prisoners with government.

" ARTHUR O'CONNOR,
" THOMAS ADDIS EMMET,
" WILLIAM JAMES MAC NEVEN.

The sending forth of this advertisement from the body of a prison, and authenticated by the names of the parties, left no doubt of the truth of its allegations. A tempest of folly and fury was immediately excited in the house of commons. Blinded by their rage, the members of that *honourable* assembly neglected the obvious distinction between the newspapers and their report. They took to themselves the falsehoods that had been repelled. Mr. M'Naghten, and two virulent barristers, Francis Hutchinson and Cuningham Plunket, were even clamorous for having the persons who signed the refutation disposed of by a summary execution. Plunket had been the bosom intimate of Emmet, the companion of his childhood, and the friend of his youth. Hutchinson afterwards acknowledged that he was instigated to what he did by the administration, which imitated in this proceeding the ancient policy of the English, in making Irishmen the executioners of one another. The conduct of both marks the inhumanity and meanness to which Irish gentlemen debased themselves at this period, the better to signalize their loyalty towards the rulers of wretched Ireland.

The prisoners were immediately remanded to the closest custody, and no friend or acquaintance was suffered to approach them. In the mean time, the committee proceeded formally in printing their report, and as the advertisement had contradicted, by anticipation, every falsehood common to that publication and to the newspapers, three of the state prisoners were again summoned

summoned before the secret committee of the house of lords, in order to draw the line between what they admitted and what they rejected.

They readily confirmed what they had actually asserted before the secret committees of parliament, and only wished that the committees would state it all to the public. But the object ministers had most at heart was to prove the existence of a military organization, the design of separating Ireland from Great Britain, and the alliance formed for this purpose with France. It was no part of their plan to bring evidence of the acts of tyranny which forced the United Irishmen into such measures. To those three points, therefore, were the questions of the committee directed. But to shew more pointedly the license taken by the ministerial newspapers, Dr. Mac Neven instanced, that of names having been disclosed, which was a misrepresentation of fact not warranted by the report of either house of parliament. It was only in allusion to this misrepresentation, and a few others of less importance, that the expression was introduced into his deposition, "which are not supported by the report of either house of parliament."

When the secret committees drew up their reports, they were neither on their oaths, nor on their honours; but they allowed themselves every possible latitude in general accusations against the whole body of United Irishmen, with a vain hope of justifying themselves while they aspersed others.

The annexed memoir and examinations contain all that passed between the Anglo-Irish government and Messrs. Emmet and Mac Neven. The committees of the lords and commons examined those gentlemen to what matters they pleased, and asked them what questions they liked. They have given their own edition of the examinations, which contain whatever they could substantiate to criminate those persons, or the Union, on their authority.

authority. Out of this record, then, no body has a right to travel for objections against them, because that accuser to which they were most obnoxious and best known, can specify nothing beyond what is there. The supplementary malice of others may evince inveteracy of dislike, but cannot affect those two deputies. It is, above all things, absurd to assert that they acknowledged any political acts not to be found in those admissions. If they did, the Anglo-Irish government would not be silent on the subject. The moment specific charges are preferred, they are reduced to the memoir and examinations; and yet it appears from them that Emmet and Mac Neven had not even the merit of being United Irishmen until 1796. That is, after the recall of Lord Fitz William, when the British cabinet sent over Lord Camden to foster the Orange system, to continue the slavery of the catholics, and to resist every measure of reform; when, indeed, there was no alternative but bondage or resistance.

From the beginning, the whole course of English government in Ireland, was unjust, tyrannical and degrading. No sooner did the United Irishmen endeavour to procure a reform of this iniquitous system, than the partizans of England, interested in its continuance, flew to fresh acts of coercion and cruelty; and then pretended that these were wrung from them by necessity, without adverting to the old and prior wrongs of the country.

During the secret imprisonment of these deputies, which followed the publication of their advertisement, an act of parliament passed through nearly all its stages, teeming in its recitals with the most injurious falsehoods. On reading them in the London Courier, Mr. Samuel Neilson wrote a letter, which he designed to send to the editor of that paper, declaring that the state prisoners had retracted nothing; but that they had entered into a compact with government, of which he inclosed him a copy, for stopping the effusion of blood.

It well merits the attention of those who lived out of the Irish metropolis at that period, that the first knowledge which any of the prisoners had of that statute was from an English newspaper. This circumstance affords a specimen of the general darkness of that tyranny and terror which were predominant, and of the peculiar obscurity in which this transaction was meant to be involved. It also further evinces the faithlessness of the Anglo-Irish Administration.

Some time antecedent to the introduction of this law, Lord Norbury, then attorney-general, mentioned to Mr. Emmet, that it was intended to bring in a bill for carrying into effect the agreement entered into between the state prisoners and the government. Mr. Emmet replied that he could see no necessity for any such bill; but if one were introduced, that the state prisoners, as peculiarly interested, ought first to receive copies of it. This the attorney-general promised should be done, and sufficient time given them to make any observations on it they might think fit. Notwithstanding such assurance, it was passed without their ever knowing its contents, except by the newspaper already mentioned, while many of them were detained in close custody, and excluded from all external communication.

Neilson, in order to leave no room for cavilling, inclosed a copy of his letter to the editor of the Courier, in one, to Lord Castlereagh, together with the newspaper and offensive passages underscored. In a few hours after, Messrs. Cook and Marsden came to Neilson's prison, asked him if he really meant to publish a contradiction to the act of parliament, and being answered in the affirmative, Mr. Cook solemnly declared, that if so, it was his excellency the Lord Lieutenant's determination to make void the compact, and cause civil and military executions to proceed as before.—But, sir, said Neilson, how can an act of mine subject others to punishment? It will, was the Secretary's answer. If you publish a syllable on the subject, the consequence shall

equally affect all. The loss of one life was not thought a sufficient curb against the workings of honest indignation, and therefore it was threatened that a mass of fellow-creatures should be involved in the same destruction. Thus we have seen men who invoke order, rend the ties of social security, and set up for themselves the ruffian law of force; men who invoke religion, address heaven to witness only the perfidy of their engagements; and those who declaim about humanity, become very copyists of the enormities they stigmatize in their enemies.

The message sent by Mr. Cook was singularly characteristic of inhuman duplicity, of remorseless cruelty, of a shameful disregard of public faith, and together with the subsequent treatment of the prisoners, forms a counter-part of the former conduct of Lord Cornwallis towards the citizens of Charleston.* Nevertheless, had the British government not found an obsequious instrument in the American minister, Mr. Rufus King, they could not have consummated their design, without a degree of undisguised perfidy of which they seemed solicitous to avoid the appearance. It was that minister who furnished the pretext

* After the battle of Camden, the behaviour of Lord Cornwallis to the American prisoners was a kind of rehearsal of the perfidiousness and cruelty which he practised so many years later against the defenceless Irish. Christopher Gadsden and the citizens of Charleston had entered into a regular capitulation with him for the surrender of that city; but no sooner did the English general find himself the stronger, than he caused, in direct violation of the articles, the most conspicuous of them to be arrested and transported to St. Augustine, as he did the Irish prisoners to Fort George. In both instances, the sufferers were sent off without previous notice; in both instances a formal compact was violated; in both cases, their private papers were seized. Though his sanguinary acts in Ireland are scarcely noticed, they fell so much short of the more infuriate atrocity of the Orangemen, yet the blood he shed there was immense, and in violation of his compact with the United Irishmen.—*Vide Castlereagh's account of the number of executions—debates in the house of commons.*

pretext under which many of the Irish state prisoners lost four years of the prime of their lives in close captivity; twenty of them were immured in a remote fortress in a foreign land, where they could not hold intercouse with their friends or their country, unless through the medium of their enemies. They saw the Duke of Portland's order concerning them, which was harsh and rigorous in the extreme; but in passing through the hands of Lieutenant-Governor the Hon. James Stuart, it received what mitigation his duty would permit, and the prisoners were sensible it would have received more, if he had had the option. But they do not complain of rigour, it has protected character which might have been blighted by the kindness of the court. It vindicates them from the calumnies of the British government and its retainers. It demonstrates that they did not sacrifice their principles to any unworthy compromise, and that they continued to deserve the enmity of the oppressors of their country.

After this view of the stipulated rights, the motives and proceedings of the Irish state prisoners, and of the whole conduct of the Anglo-Irish government, what must any impartial man think of the miserable affection of branding them with a crime by styling them traitors? To submit from fear, where there is just ground for resistance, is pusillanimous; to oppose tyranny with arms, where peaceable redress has been refused, is heroic and virtuous. The United Irishmen endeavoured to make it likewise prudent, by allying themselves with a power able to second them, and, if it had judged wisely, deeply interested in their success.

Those who are accustomed to confound names with things, will see in the term traitor nothing but reproach: To the United Irishmen, provoked by so many wrongs, it is matter of boast and triumph. If by applying to them that appellation, no more be intended than technically to express that they broke the laws which are calculated to protect the existing government, be it

what it may; they adopt the epithet, and proudly avow themselves traitors to the tyrants of their country, and to the acts of power by which it is enslaved. They hazarded their lives in order to overthrow a system of government, and to destroy a connexion, which, after very mature reflection, they considered as the most baneful curses on their native land. But let it be observed, that they never meditated the destruction, even of that system of government, or of that connexion, until they had tried and found vain every other effort for giving liberty and happiness to Ireland.

If by applying to them the term traitor, it be intended to express that they violated any duty which a citizen owes to the community of his fellow-citizens, they deny the accusation, and repel the charge of treason on the Irish parliament and the Anglo-Irish government. These were the subverters of whatever little liberty Ireland enjoyed. They were the supporters of a connexion which they have practically shewn can never exist with Irish prosperity and freedom. Notwithstanding all the great physical and moral advantages which Ireland possesses, she is unknown, and almost always has been, as a nation, in consequence of that connexion: she is bent down and prostrated by the incumbent pressure of her tyrant. To maintain the avarice and ambition of England, Irishmen are daily forced to shed their blood without glory or profit to their country. Victory itself rivits their chains the faster. In vain are they placed in the most advantageous position for unlimited commerce, in vain are they blessed with a fruitful soil, with inexhaustible mines, with navigable rivers, with the noblest harbours. All these natural benefits are blasted by an imperious rival, before whose domination their strength is withered, their resources exhausted, their aptitudes sacrificed, and the spirit of emulation strangled in its birth. Ireland never has enjoyed a free constitution: even before the Union had annilated her as a nation, her government was provincial, servile and corrupt; her people were represented no where.

England

England bought her nominal representatives to betray her, and paid them with the money levied on herself. Of the three hundred seats of the Irish house of commons, two hundred were the property of between thirty and forty individuals, who received for them a compensation of a million and a half sterling at the passing of the Union, and which sum, by the authority of those very men, was levied on the nation. The sanguinary and deluded Orangemen is also the legitimate growth of English policy, which has long fomented, and still perpetuates, the spirit of religious dissension; because that in the cordial union of Irishmen, England beholds the downfall of her usurpation, and the establishment of their liberties. Will any patriot, will any honest man, accuse the United Irishmen of having violated a duty towards their fellow-citizens, by labouring to destroy this horrible combination of flagitious fraud and systematic tyranny!

Look at the map of Europe. Place Ireland side by side with England: her climate is as auspicious, her soil as fertile, her people as intelligent, her situation more favourable. Why, then, has Ireland been sunk in poverty and wretchedness, while in East, West, and South, in Asia, Africa and America, the name of Britain is not more known and dreaded, even for the enormity of her crimes, than for the greatness of her dominion? Because from the first landing of Henry the Second, Ireland was a dependant province, and England an independent nation.

As to the charge of overturning the constitution, when it is preferred, let the question be also asked, what was meant by this anamolous thing, which the government have since overturned by the Union, without substituting a better? Was it the sale of representation, an oligarchical monopoly of power, an exclusive enjoyment, by a few, of the universal rights of nature, the political tyranny of one thousandth part, and the political slavery of the residue of the community? And by whom are the United Irishmen accused? By those who, to palliate the corruption they must admit, alledge, as Lord Castlereagh

tlereagh did to Mr. Emmet,* that a free house of commons would be incompatible with, and destructive of, the other two estates. The Irish never had, nor indeed have even the English themselves ever had, what political philosophers, in their speculations, call the English constitution; an English minister says they never could by possibility have it—and then, under the insidious use of an equivocal expression, he accuses the United Irishmen of endeavouring to subvert a thing that did not, and, as he alledges, cannot exist.

But those persons whom their enemies style leaders of the United Irishmen, were actuated, it is said, by ambitious and unworthy motives. What are the proofs, and who are the accusers? The proofs are absolutely none; and let it be again observed, the accusers are men who, to apologize for their own vice, deny the reality of virtue. Those who have studied human nature only in the meanness of their hearts, and the depravity of Irish politics, may be expected, and perhaps permitted, to dispute the existence of disinterested patriotism; but the upright and moral man will not credit such foul calumnies without proof. With impartial minds, the purity of the object will be considered the best evidence of the purity of the motive.

Guarding the secret of those leading United Irishmen who have escaped persecution and suspicion, and particularising only some of those whose names have acquired publicity; these imputations may be repelled by observing, that if Lord Edw. Fitzgerald had been actuated in his political life by dishonourable ambition, he had only to cling to his great family connexions and parliamentary influence. They unquestionably would have advanced his fortunes and gratified his desires. The voluntary sacrifices he made, and the magnanimous manner in which he devoted himself for the independence of Ireland, are incontestible proofs of the generosity and purity of his soul. Mr. Henry Jackson, now happily

* Vide the examination of Mr. Emmet before the secret committee of the house of commons.

happily in America, and Mr. John Sweetman, an emigrant in France, embarked very large fortunes, and the advantages of the highest commercial credit, in the same service; and, finally, they relinquished their country to redeem the blood of her children. Hamden Evans, than whom Ireland did not possess a more respected name, in the first line of connexion, affluent in fortune and temperate in every personal wish, what could induce him to set those advantages all at hazard, but the commanding sense of duty, the irresistible impulse of patriotic virtue?

The reputation which Mr. Emmet inherited on his entrance into his profession, and the character he had acquired in it, were sufficient to flatter the most sanguine expectation. Had he chosen to yield to the solicitations of ambition, without regard to the means of elevation; had he entered the parliamentary career in the service of government; had he adopted that line of conduct, by which very inferior abilities, provided there was still less integrity, were raised to eminence; he might, without much delay or any personal hazard, have arrived at the guilty honours of the Anglo-Irish court.—It was only necessary to desert Irish interests for British domination, to support religious intolerance, to grasp at personal emolument, while the strength of Ireland was frittered, isolated and paralized; only requisite to resist that parliamentary reform which alone could correct abuses, and afford the nation a guarantee for its rights; simply to prefer the advantage of England in every competition; in fine, to signalize obedience and confirm loyalty, by selling the existence of an Irish parliament, and making war on the principles of liberty itself.

Integrity, indeed, forbade this course; but ambition has universally trodden it, in the way to fortune and to power.

When the United Irishmen are censured, it is not by those who think there is a moral obligation of doing all we can, and

at

at every hazard, to maintain the independence and rights, to defend the honour and happiness of our country: to resist the attacks of despotism, whether in the shape of corruption or violence. No, it is by those creatures in whom the principle of action does not rise above the level of individual interest; by those corrupt minds that never expand to a love of country, a love of liberty, a sense of public prosperity. But the United Irishmen were taught by their principles, that the people alone are the fountain of all just power, and that to their freely chosen delegates belongs the right of exercising authority over the nation. If what their detractors see in Ireland, be not a free people in the exercise of those just rights, but a population of slaves, oppressed at once by a foreign tyranny and a native faction, which that tyranny constitutes the subordinate agent of its worst inflictions, which performs the drudgery of its vengeance, and receives for this loathsome office a compensation wrung from the vitals of the people, or raised on the ruins of their violated majesty; if this be what our detractors must behold in Ireland, let them forget their prejudices but for a moment, place themselves a few years later in existence, suppose themselves already standing at the impartial distance of posterity, and then, communing with their consciences, let them say what were the demerits of the United Irishmen?

Had this association succeeded in the noblest enterprize that ever was concerted for the relief of Ireland, by breaking that chain of slavery which has held her in wretchedness for six hundred years, she would cease to be rent by the savage policy of a jealous rival, impoverished by the extravagant expenditures of a bankrupt associate, sacrificed for the only nation on earth of which she has reason to complain, or exhausted at every vein for the avaricious and liberticide wars of England. Her resources would be employed for her own interest and glory; her inborn energy would be turned to her own happiness; the wants and ignorance of her peasantry would be removed; the unnatural union

union of church and state, which degrades religion into an engine of profane policy, would be dissolved; tythes, the bane of agriculture, would be abolished; the memory of religious dissensions would be lost. She would be a nation, not a province; her people would be citizens, not slaves; her flag would be seen on the ocean; her commerce would extend over the globe; her name would be exalted among the people of the earth.—She would assume that station for which nature intended her, and for her protection she need only look to God and to her courage.

But as the deliverer of the Israelites was not permitted to accomplish what he had begun, so others, more fortunate, but not more zealous than the United Irishmen of 1798, will perhaps lead the bondmen of their race to the promised land of independence. And in that day when the cause of Ireland shall again be arbitrated by the hand of power, we beseech thee, God of the oppressed! to give liberty to our enslaved, and concord to our distracted country; to add skill to the valour, perseverance to the enthusiasm, and union to the efforts of her sons: and when the patriot shall be triumphant and liberty secure, teach him to discern and to compassionate, in the persons of his enemies, and deluded instruments of a foreign policy, whom prejudice had misled, whom reason may reclaim, and kindness turn into friends. Above all, drive for ever from thy chastened land, the impious persecution of thy creatures under pretext of thy service, and erect an imperishable edifice of Irish freedom on the firm foundation of civil harmony, equal rights, and National Independence.

MEMOIR,

OR, DETAILED STATEMENT OF THE ORIGIN AND PROGRESS OF THE IRISH UNION:

Delivered to the Irish Government

BY MESSRS. EMMET, O'CONNOR, AND MAC NEVEN,

August, the 4th, 1798.

THE disunion that had long existed between the catholics and protestants of Ireland, particularly those of the presbyterian religion, was found by experience to be so great an obstable to the obtaining a reform in parliament, on any thing of just and popular principles, that some persons, equally friendly to that measure and to religious toleration, conceived the idea of uniting both sects in pursuance of the same object—a repeal of the penal laws, and a reform, including in itself an extension of the right of suffrage to the catholic.

From this originated the societies of the United Irishmen in the end of the year 1791; even then it was clearly perceived that the chief support of the borough interest in Ireland was the weight of English influence; but as yet that obvious remark had not led the minds of the reformers towards a separation from England. Some individuals, perhaps, had convinced themselves that benefit would result to this country from such a measure; but

but during the whole existence of the socity of United Irishmen of Dublin, we may safely aver, to the best of our knowledge and recollections, that no such object was ever agitated by its members, either in public debate or private conversation, nor until the society had lasted a considerable time, were any traces of republicanism to be met with there: its views were purely, and in good faith, what the test of the society avows. Those, however, were sufficient to excite the most lively uneasiness in the friends of protestant ascendancy and unequal representation; insomuch that the difficulty of their attainment, notwithstanding the beginning union of sects, became manifest. But with the difficulty, the necessity of the measure was still more obvious; and the disposition of the people, to run greater risques, for what they conceived both difficult and necessary to be had, was encreased. This will sufficiently account for the violent expressions and extraordinary proposals that are attributed to that society.—One of the latter was, that of endeavouring, at some future, but undetermined time, to procure the meeting of a convention, which should take into consideration the best mode of effecting a reform in parliament, as had been done in the year 1784. It was thought the weight and power of such a body, backed as it was hoped it would be, with the support of catholic and protestant, and the encreased spirit towards liberty which arose from the French revolution, would procure a more favourable issue to the efforts of that convention, than had attended those of the former; but the object, as yet, went no farther than a reform in parliament, only on more broad and liberal principles.

The discussion, however, of political questions, both foreign and domestic, and the enacting of several unpopular laws, had advanced the minds of many people, even before they were aware of it, towards republicanism and revolution; they began to reason on the subject, and to think a republican form of government was preferable to our own; but they still considered it as

impossible to be obtained, in consequence of the English power and connexion. This, together with its being constantly perceived that the weight of English was thrown into the scale of borough interest, gradually rendered the connexion itself an object of discussion; and its advantages somewhat problematical. While the minds of men were taking this turn, the society of United Irishmen in Dublin was in the year 1794 forcibly dissolved, but the principles by which it was actuated were as strong as ever; as hypocrisy was not of the vices of that society, it brought its destruction on itself by the openness of its discussion and publicity of its proceeding. Its fate was a warning to that of Belfast, and suggested the idea of forming societies, with the same object, but whose secrecy should be their protection.—The first of these societies was, as we best recollect, in the year 1795. In order to secure co-operation and uniformity of action, they organized a system of committees, baronial, county, and provincial, and even national; but it was long before the skeleton of this organization was filled up. While the formation of these societies was in agitation, the friends of liberty were gradually, but with a timid step, advancing towards republicanism; they began to be convinced, that it would be as easy to obtain a revolution as a reform, so obstinately was the latter resisted, and as the conviction impressed itself on their minds, they were inclined not to give up the struggle, but to extend their views; it was for this reason that in their test the words are "an equal representation of all the people of Ireland," without inserting the word parliament. The test embraced both the republican and the reformer, and left to future circumstances to decide to which the common strength should be directed; but still the whole body, we are convinced, would stop short at reform. Another consideration, however, led the minds of the reflecting United Irishmen to look towards a republic and separation from England—this was the war with France; they clearly perceived that their strength was not likely to become speedily equal to wresting from the English and the borough

borough interest in Ireland, even a reform; foreign assistance would, therefore, perhaps become necessary; but foreign assistance could only be hoped for in proportion as the object to which it would be applied was important to the party giving it. A reform in the Irish parliament was no object to the French—a separation of Ireland from England was a mighty one indeed.—Thus they reasoned: shall we, between two objects, confine ourselves to the least valuable, even though it is equally difficult to be obtained, if we consider the relation of Ireland with the rest of Europe.

Whatever progress the United system had made among the catholics throughout the kingdom, until after the recall of Lord Fitzwilliam, (notwithstanding many resolutions which had appeared from them, manifesting a growing spirit,) they were considered as not only entertaining an habitual predilection for monarchy, but also as being less attached than the presbyterians to political liberty. There were, however, certain men among them who rejoiced at the rejection of their claims, because it gave them an opportunity of pointing out that the adversaries of reform were their adversaries; and that these two objects could never be separated with any chance of success to either. They used the recall of that nobleman, and the rejection of his measures, to cement together in political union the catholic and presbyterian masses.

The modern societies, for their protection against informers and persecution, had introduced into their test a clause of secrecy. They did more—they changed the engagements of their predecessors into an oath; and mutual confidence encreased, when religion was called in aid of mutual security.

While they were almost entirely confined to the north, but encreasing rapidly there, the insurrection bill was passed in the beginning of the year 1796, augmenting the penalties upon administering unlawful oaths, or solemn obligations even to death: but

but death had ceased to alarm men who began to think it was to be encountered in their country's cause. The statute remained an absolute dead letter, and the numbers of the body augmented beyond belief.

To the ARMAGH PERSECUTION is the Union of Irishmen most exceedingly indebted. The persons and properties of the wretched catholics of that county were exposed to the merciless attacks of an ORANGE FACTION, which was certainly in many instances uncontrouled by the justices of peace, and claimed to be in all supported by government. When these men found that illegal acts of magistrates were indemnified by occasional statutes, and the courts of justice shut against them by parliamentary barriers, they began to think they had no refuge but in joining the Union. Their dispositions so to do were much encreased by finding the presbyterians, of Belfast especially, step forward to espouse their cause, and succour their distress. We will here remark once for all, what we most solemnly aver, that wherever the Orange system was introduced, particularly in catholic counties, it was uniformly observed that the numbers of United Irishmen encreased most astonishingly. The alarm which an Orange lodge excited among the catholics made them look for refuge by joining together in the United system; and as their number was always greater than that of bigotted protestants, our harvest was ten-fold. At the same time that we mention this circumstance, we must confess, and most deeply regret, that it excited a mutual acrimony and vindictive spirit, which was peculiarly opposite to the interest, and abhorrent to the feelings of the United Irishmen, and has lately manifested itself, we hear, in outrages of so much horror.

Defenderism has been supposed to be the origin of the modern societies of United Irishmen: this is undoubtedly either a mistake or a misrepresentation; we solemnly declare that there was no connexion between them and the United Irish, as far as we know, except what follows:

After

After the defenders had spread into different counties, they manifested a rooted but unenlightened aversion, among other things, to the same grievances that were complained of by the Union. They were composed almost entirely of catholics, and those of the lowest order, who, through a false confidence, were risking themselves, and the attainment of redress, by premature and unsystematic insurrection. In the north they were also engaged in an acrimonious and bloody struggle with an opposite faction called peep-of-day boys. The advantage of reconciling these two misguided parties, of joining them in the Union, and so turning them from any views they might have exclusively religious, and of restraining them from employing a mutually destructive exertion of force, most powerfully struck the minds of several United Irishmen. For that purpose, many of them in the northern counties went among both, but particularly the Defenders, joined with them, shewed the superiority of the Union system, and gradually, while government was endeavouring to quell them by force, melted them down into the United Irish body. This rendered their conduct infinitely more orderly, and less suspicious to government.

It has been alledged against the United Irishmen, that they established a system of assassination. Nothing that has ever been imputed to them, that we feel more pleasure in being able to disavow. In such immense numbers as were to be found in that body, although uniformity of system may have given a wonderful uniformity of action, yet it is unfair and unjust to charge the whole body with the vices of a few of its members: individual grievances produced individual resentments, and the meeting of many sufferers in the same way, frequently caused them to concur in the same resolutions. It appears, indeed, by some trials, that a baronial once took that subject into consideration, but it was manifest it was taken up by them as individuals, whose principles, as it afterwards appeared, were not repugnant to the act. A committee of assassination has been much talked of—

of—we have heard persons mentioned as members of it, whom we know, from the most private and confidential conversations, to be utterly abhorrent from the crime. We solemnly declare, we believe that such a committee never existed.—We most positively aver, it never was with the cognizance of any part of the Union. We also declare, that in no communication from those who were placed at the head of the United Irishmen, to the rest of that body, and in no official paper, was assassination ever inculcated, but frequently and fervently reprobated. It was considered by them with horror, on account of its criminality—and with personal dread, because it would render ferocious the minds of men in whose hands their lives were placed, most particularly placed; inasmuch as between them and the rest of that body they were out of the protection of the law. In proof of this assertion, we would beg leave to refer to a sketch of a publication which we believe was seized among the papers of one of us, at the time of his arrest, and which it was intended should appear if the paper to which it alluded had not been discontinued.—One other consideration, which we entreat may not offend, will, we hope, be decisive. If such committee had existed, and if the men at the head of the United Irishmen had thought assassination a justifiable mode of obtaining their ends, and had been capable of encouraging such atrocity, possessed as they were of wide-spread means of acting, and powerful controul over men, who, it is now manifest, held the loss of life in utter contempt, the poinard would have been directed, not against such petty objects as an obnoxious country magistrate, or an informer.

We were none of us members of the United system until September or October, in the year 1796; at that time, it must be confessed, the reasons already alledged, and the irritations of the preceding summer in the north, had disposed us to a separation and republic, principally because we were hopeless that a reform would ever be yielded to any peaceable exertions of the people.

people. We cannot be accurate as to the progress either of the numbers or organization of the United Irishmen, it having been an invariable rule to burn all the returns or other papers, after they ceased to be useful; we have no documents wherewith to refresh our memories, but we apprehend the report of the secret committee to be, in that case, sufficiently accurate, except that the numbers were always much greater than appeared by those reports; the documents on which they rely only noticed those who went regularly into societies; but great numbers, perhaps, at a rough guess, half as many were sworn to the test, who were prevented by private motives and local circumstances, from committing themselves in that way; we are, however, convinced that the numbers of the whole body could not latterly be less than 500,000.

The return from the different societies and committees upwards, specified, among other things, arms and ammunition; they were not originally included in them, nor were they introduced until after the passing the insurrection and indemnity acts, when the people began to be more than ever carried towards resistance, and were extremely irritated by the indemnified violations of law in the north. The returns also stated, sums of money having been collected; those sums were always very small, and applied towards the support of persons imprisoned on charges connected with the Union, and in conducting of their defences; any other expences were defrayed by occasional private subscriptions.

The printed constitution mentions a national committee: none such, strictly speaking, was ever formed at first, because to its appointment two provincials at least were necessary; and before the organization in any other part of the kingdom could reach to a provincial, the immense number in Ulster required a supreme head.—Some persons were then chosen by the northern provincial, with powers to associate to themselves such others as they

should think fit. They were commonly called the executive. When the organization began in Leinster, and shortly after the French left Bantry Bay, some persons resident in this province were associated to that body; things continued thus until many began to think that elections should take place pursuant to the constitution. The fidelity of the people had by that time been so abundantly proved, that men did not hesitate to submit themselves to a guarded election by the Leinster provincial. National delegates were therefore chosen by it, who acted for their own province, and occasionally consulted with the executive of the north on subjects of general importance. The election of national delegates first took place, as we best recollect, about the latter end of November or December, 1797.

The military organization had no existence until towards the latter end of 1796, and was as near as could be engrafted on the civil: in order to avoid giving alarm, it continued to conceal itself as much as possible under the usual denominations. The secretary of a society of twelve was commonly the petty officer; the delegate of five societies to a lower baronial, when the population required such an intermediate step, was usually the captain, and the delegate from the lower to the upper baronial was usually the colonel. All officers to colonels up were indispensibly elected by those they were to command, but at that point the interference of the societies ceased, and every higher commission was in the appointment of the executive; only as soon as sufficient numbers of regiments were organized in any county, the colonels were directed to transmit to the executive the names of three persons fit, in their opinion, to act as adjutants-general for that county; of those the executive choose one; and through this organ, all military communications were made to the several counties. In consequence of such arrangements, not more than one of the executive need ever be committed with any county, and that only to a person of his own choice from among three. It so happened, that the same member was entitled

titled to hold communication with several adjutants-general, which still further diminished the risk to the executive: we refer to the amended printed constitution, where the military organization without being named, is more correctly set forth, than we can give it from memory. As to the manner in which these men were to be provided with arms and ammunition, every man who could afford it was directed to provide himself with a musket, bayonet, and as much ammunition as he could; every other man with a pike, and, if he was able, a case of pistols; but this, we apprehend, was not strictly adhered to. We have heard it said, that treasurers were appointed for raising money to purchase arms, but no such appointment was ever made, at least by the executive. Perhaps some private societies might have adopted such a measure.

In many instances, the lower orders went about to private houses to search for arms; this the executive constantly endeavoured to prevent, because they were unwilling to raise alarm in their adversaries, or let the members of their body acquire habits of plunder, and be confounded with robbers. They endeavoured to dissuade them from these acts, by representing to the people that the arms would always be kept in better condition by the gentlemen than by them, and could be easily seized whenever necessary. In other respects our stores were in the arsenal in the castle, and the military depots throughout the country; our supplies were in the treasury.

A military committee was appointed by the executive in February, 1798, for the principal purpose of preparing plans of operations, either in case of a premature insurrection, if we should be unfortunately and unwillingly forced into one, or of the invasion from France. As a committee it did nothing, but some of its members took up the consideration of the latter subject, and framed instructions how to act in case of a landing of a foreign force;—these were sent by the executive to

such adjutants-general as had received their appointments; they generally went to use every effort in favour of the French.

Attempts were made with as much zeal as the necessary caution would permit, to introduce the system among the military, the militia especially; but the reports of the agents were mostly confused and unsatisfactory, so that the success of the measure could never be ascertained with any tolerable accuracy.

We have read in some evidence lately given, that a person was appointed colonel by a commission from a general in the rebel army. We must beg leave to doubt, if not deny, the truth of that assertion. No general was ever chosen for Leinster, and colonels were always appointed by their captains; they derived their authority from this appointment, not from any commission of a general.

If Irish officers in foreign service had joined in our cause, they would have been gladly received, and rapidly promoted. Indeed an attempt to procure that was actually set on foot; we counted on their attachment to their native soil, and hatred to England, as a substitute for republicanism, and when they should be convinced that such a form of government was the best security for the permanent separation of the two countries, we were sure of their fidelity. It has so happened, however, from the delay of peace on the continent, or because our agent was over cautious in conducting the negotiation lest it should become known to the respective potentates, and communicated to the British court, that nothing in consequence of it has hitherto been effected.

We can aver, that no general plan of insurrection existed before the 12th of March, 1798; but some individuals had perhaps

haps formed local ones, adapted to the taking Dublin, and a few other places. When the north was on the point of rising, after the celebrated proclamation of General Lake, a plan of operations had been suggested for that occasion, which was destroyed as soon as the people were dissuaded from the enterprize, of which we cannot now speak with any degree of precision.

Several recommendations were occasionally handed down from the executive, through the committees, the dates or contents of which we cannot undertake to detail, unless they should be called to our recollection. The most remarkable, as they now occur to us, was a recommendation to abstain from spirituous and exciseable articles, not so much to destroy the resources of government, as for the purpose of preserving sobriety, which was so necessary to secrecy; and morality, which was so necessary to good order. It may be right to remark, that the recommendation was, however painful to the people and contrary to their former habits, most astonishingly complied with. The executive also directed to discourage the circulation of bank notes, and published a hand-bill cautioning against the purchasing of quit-rents, pursuant to a scheme then in agitation, declaring, that as such a sale was an anticipation of the future resources of the country, it should not be allowed to stand good in the event of a revolution. The reasons for these publications are obvious. We must here remark, that many things were intrusted by the executive to some one of its members; it having been an invariable rule, that no more than one of them should, on any occasion, be committed with persons not of its body. For this reason, many things here stated are set forth on the credit of one individual, but believed by the remainder.

About the middle of 1796, a meeting of the executive took place, more important in its discussions and its consequences, than any that had preceded it; as such we have thought ourselves bound to give an account of it with the most perfect frankness, and

and more than ordinary precision. This meeting took place in consequence of a letter from one of the society, who had emigrated on account of political opinions: it mentioned that the state of the country had been represented to the government of France in so favourable a point of view, as to induce them to resolve upon invading Ireland, for the purpose of enabling it to separate itself from Great Britain. On this solemn and important occasion, a serious review was taken of the state of the Irish nation at that period: it was observed that a desperate ferment existed in the public mind; a resolution in favour of a parliamentary reform had indeed been passed in 1795 by the house of commons—but after it had been frustrated by several successive adjournments, all hope of its attainment vanished, and its friends were every where proscribed; the volunteers were put down; all power of meeting by delegation for any political purpose, the mode in which it was most usual and expedient to cooperate on any subject of importance, was taken away at the same time. The provocations of the year 1794, the recall of Lord Fitzwilliam, and the re-assumption of coercive measures that followed it, were strongly dwelt on: the county of Armagh had been long desolated by two contending factions, agreeing only in one thing, an opinion, that most of the active magistrates in that county treated one party with the most fostering kindness, and the other with the most rigorous persecution. It was stated, that so marked a partiality exasperated the sufferers, and those who sympathized in their misfortunes. It was urged with indignation, that notwithstanding the greatness of the military establishment in Ireland, and its having been able to suppress the Defenders in various counties, it was not able, or was not employed to suppress these outrages in that county, which drove 7000 persons from their native dwellings. The magistrates, who took no steps against the Orangemen, were said to have overleaped the boundaries of law to pursue and punish the Defenders. The government seemed to take upon themselves those injuries by the indemnity act, and even honoured the violators;

and

and by the insurrection act, which enabled the same magistrates, if they choose, under colour of law, to act anew the same abominations. Nothing, it was contended, could more justly excite the spirit of resistance, and determine men to appeal to arms, than the insurrection act; it punished with death the administering of oaths, which in their opinion were calculated for the most virtuous and honourable purposes. The power of proclaiming counties, and quieting them by breaking open the cabins of the peasants between sunset and sunrise, by seizing the inmates, and sending them on board tenders, without the ordinary interposition of a trial by jury, had, it was alledged, irritated beyond endurance the minds of the reflecting, and the feelings of the unthinking inhabitants of that province. It was contended, that even according to the constitution and example of 1688, when the protection of the constituted authorities was drawn from the subject, allegiance, the reciprocal duty, ceased to bind; when the people were not redressed, they had a right to resist, and were free to seek for allies wherever they were to be found. The English revolutionists of 1688 called in the aid of a foreign republic to overthrow their oppressors. There had sprung up in our own time a much more mighty republic, which, by its offers of assistance to break the chains of slavery, had drawn on itself a war with the enemies of our freedom, and now particularly tendered us its aid. These arguments prevailed, and it was resolved to employ the proffered assistance for the purpose of separation. We are aware it is suspected that negociations between the United Irishmen and the French were carried on at an earlier period than that now alluded to, but we solemnly declare such suspicion is ill-founded. In consequence of this determination of the executive, an agent was dispatched to the French directory, who acquainted them with it, stated the dispositions of the people, and the measures which caused them. He received fresh assurances that the succours should be sent as soon as the armament could be got ready.

About

About October, 1796, a messenger from the republic arrived, who, after authenticating himself, said he came to be informed of the state of the country, and to tell the leaders of the United Irishmen of the intention of the French to invade it speedily with 15,000 men, and a great quantity of arms and ammunition; but neither mentioned the precise time, nor the place, doubting, we suppose, our caution, or our secrecy.—Shortly after his departure, a letter arrived from a quarter, which there was reason to look on as confidential, stating that they would invade England in the spring, and positively Ireland.—The reason of this contradiction has never been explained; but the consequences of it, and the messenger not having specified the place of landing, were, that when the armament arrived in December, 1796, at Bantry Bay, they came at a time, and in a port we had not foreknown.

After the intended descent had failed, it occurred to some of the members of the association, and their friends in the city, and to some of the most considerate of the United Irishmen, that one more attempt should be made in favour of parliamentary reform. They hoped that the terrible warning which had been given by the facility of reaching our coasts, and if the armament had landed, the possibility at least of its succeeding, would have shewn the borough proprietors the necessity of conceding to the popular wish. The storm had dispersed a cloud big with danger, but it might again collect, and the thunder of republic and revolution again roll, and burst over their heads. This was then judged the best moment to persuade them, in the midst of their fears, to a measure strictly counter-revolutionary.

We think it but right to state, that no greater connexion ever subsisted between any of the members of the opposition and the United Irishmen, except in this instance, and for the accomplishment of this purpose. In consequence of these joint efforts

efforts a meeting was held at the exchange, which declared in favour of reform, and a proposal of that nature was submitted to parliament. If in the course of that effort for reform it had not become evident that success was hopeless, it was the wish of many among us, and we believe the executive would have gladly embraced the occasion of declining to hold any further intercourse with France, except sending a messenger there to tell them that the difference between government and the people had been adjusted, and that they would have no business a second time to attempt a landing. In fact, no attempt or advance was made to renew the negociation till April, 1797, when an agent was sent. In the May following, the well known proclamation of General Lake appeared. This very much encreased the ferment of the public mind, and the wish for the return of the French, to get rid of the severities of martial-law. It did more—it goaded many people of the north to press the executive to an insurrection, independent of foreign aid.

About this time a letter arrived, which assured us the French would come again, and requesting that a person should be sent over to make previous arrangements. The eagerness of those in the north, who were urgent for insurrection, was checked by making known this communication to them, and entreating for delay; it was resisted likewise by some of the most sober and reflecting among themselves, who were of opinion they were not yet sufficiently prepared for the attempt; those considerations prevailed, particularly as, in order to enforce them, an advantage was taken of the wish expressed by their enemies, that the people might rise.

The impatience, however, which was manifested on this occasion, and the knowledge that it was only controled by the expectation of speedy and foreign assistance, determined the executive to send an agent speedily to France in answer to the letter. This person departed in the latter end of June, 1797.

By both these agents, rather a small number of men, with a great quantity of arms, ammunition, artillery and officers were required; a small force only was asked for, because the executive, faithful to the principle of Irish independence, wished for what they deemed just sufficient to liberate their country, but incompetent to subdue it.—Their most determined resolution, and that of the whole body, being collected as far as its opinions could be taken, always has been in no event to let Ireland come under the dominion of France, but it was offered to pay the expences of the expedition. The number required was 10,000 men at the most, and at the least 5,000. The executive inclined to the larger number; but even with the smaller, the general opinion among them was, there could be no doubt of success. As to the quantity of arms, by the first messenger 40,000 stand were specified, but by the second, as much more as could be sent; the difference arose from the disarming that had gone on in the north, and the encreasing numbers who were ready to use them. The executive also instructed its agents to negotiate for a loan of money, if it could be had in France; if not, to negociate with Spain—the sum was half a million. Our second agent, on his arrival at Hamburg, wrote a memorial containing those and other details, a copy of which some way or other, we perceive the government has obtained, and therefore refer to it. He then proceeded to Paris, to treat further on the business, where he presented a second memorial; the object of this was to urge motives arising out of the state of affairs, which would induce constant the directory not to postpone the invasion. We cannot precisely state the whole of its contents, as, according to the practice already mentioned, no copy of it has been preserved; but it went to demonstrate that the disposition which then existed in the Irish mind was in no future contingency to be expected, nor in any subsequent rupture between Great Britain and the French republic; that his majesty's ministers must see Ireland would infallibly become the seat of war, if they did not previously remove those grievances, the existence of which would

would naturally invite, and prove a powerful auxiliary to the enemy. Such a rupture, it was observed, must be in the contemplation of the British cabinet, as several of its most leading members declared that they considered the existence of the British monarchy incompatible with that of the republic. Conciliation, then, according to every rule of policy and common sense, would be ultimately adopted; and though it should fall short of the wishes of the people, it was asserted, if once possessed of a reasonable share of liberty, they would not be brought to run the chance of a revolution in order to obtain a more perfect system of freedom.

Our second agent, while at Paris, and pending the negociation at Lisle, was told by some of the persons in power in France, that if certain terms, not specified to him, were offered by the English, peace would certainly be made. However, after the negotiation was broken off, he received positive assurance that the Irish never should be abandoned until a separation was effected, and that they should be left entirely at their own option to choose their own form of government.

About this time a person came over, informing us that a considerable army was ready, and embarked at the Texel, destined for Ireland, and only waiting for a wind. The troops afterwards disembarked, but we are ignorant of the reason why they never sailed, except perhaps that the wind continued so long adverse, that the provisions were exhausted—and that in the mean time disturbances broke out in the French government. It may be proper to remark, that in none of the communications or negotiations with France, did the government of that country ever intimate the place they would land, or, except in the first, the force they would bring.

Sometime in the beginning of the year, a letter was received from France, stating that the succours might be expected in April. Why the promise was not fulfilled, we have never

learned. We know nothing of further communications from any foreign state, nor of the future plan of operations of the French; but we are convinced they will not abandon the plan of separating this country from England, so long as the discontents of the people would induce them to support an invasion.

Let us, then, while Ireland is yet our country, be indulged in a few remarks, which we deem extremely important to its future prosperity; now that we have given these full and faithful details of the past, we cannot be suspected of any but pure and disinterested motives in what we are about to say, ere we leave it for ever. The parts we have acted, have enabled us to gain the most intimate knowledge of the dispositions and hearts of our countrymen. From that knowledge we speak, when we declare our deepest conviction that the penal laws, which have followed in such doleful and rapid succession—the house-burnings—arbitrary imprisonments—free quarters—and above all, the tortures to extort confessions—neither have had, or can have, any other effect but exciting the most lively rancour in the hearts of almost all the people of Ireland, against those of their countrymen who have had recourse to such measures for maintaining their power, and against the connexion with Great Britain, whose men and whose aid have been poured in to assist them.

The matchless fidelity which has marked the Union—the unexampled firmness and contempt of death displayed by so many thousands at the halbert, in the field, in the goal, and at the gibbet, exempt us from claiming any belief on our personal credit. If the hearts of the people be not attached by some future measures, this nation will be again and more violently disturbed, on the coming of a foreign force. If a reform be adopted, founded upon the abolition of corporations and boroughs, as constituent bodies, and the equal division of the representatives among those who may be entitled to the elective suffrage, the best

best possible step will be taken for preserving the monarchical constitution, and British connexion. For the success of this measure, we would not now answer—but of this we are sure, you must either extirpate or reform.

The hurry and still agitated minds with which we write, will, we hope, not only apologize for any inaccuracy of style, but likewise serve the much more important purpose of excusing any expressions that may not be deemed sufficiently circumspect. Much as we wish to stop the effusion of blood, and the present scene of useless horrors, we have not affected a change of principles, which would only bring on us the imputation of hypocrisy, when it is our most anxious wish to evince perfect sincerity and good faith. We, however, entreat government to be assured, that while it is so much our interest to conciliate, it is far from our intention to offend.

ARTHUR O'CONNOR,
THOMAS ADDIS EMMET,
WILLIAM JAMES MAC NEVEN.

THE

THE EXAMINATION

OF

WILLIAM JAMES MAC NEVEN,

BEFORE THE SECRET COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS,

AUGUST 7, 1798.

I TOOK the following minute of my examinations before the secret committees of the lords and commons, being convinced that they would not publish the entire of my answers, and that I should possibly find it necessary, in vindication of truth, to publish them myself. The garbled, disingenuous report of these committees has appeared, and when I had an opportunity of complaining to the Lord Chancellor of the unfairness with which my examinations are set forth in the appendix to it, he did not deny the fact, but declared very roundly, I must not expect they would publish more of them than would answer their purpose.—This, to be sure, was candid, and I will not conceal one of the very few merits I can allow his lordship.

The Lord Chancellor had before him extracts from the memoir which we sent to Lord Castlereagh on the 4th of August, in fulfilment of our agreement with government. They related to the facts detailed in our paper concerning the history and progress of the Union, detached from an account of the motives and abuses which were stated by us to have given rise to the

the resolutions we adopted. The examination was altogether conducted in a manner to obtain for such parts of the memoir, a certain authenticity for publication, without publishing the memoir itself. He went into a minute examination of the civil and military organization, and the various communications with France. When he came to that part which mentions a memoir given to the French minister at Hamburgh, he turned to an extract of a copy of it which he had before him. Upon some subsequent occasion, he said that no copy of the entire was ever sent from England, and in this I can readily believe him.—He asked how that memoir happened to be given to the French minister? I answered that the Irish agent applied to the French minister for a passport to go into France, which the minister made some difficulty in granting, but called for a memoir, and offered to transmit it to his government. The memoir was accordingly written, and soon after the person got a passport. This tedious examination took up several hours.

Lord Chancellor. Pray, Dr. Mac Neven, what number of troops did the Irish directory require from the French government for the invasion of Ireland?

Mac Neven. The *minimum* force was 5,000 men, the *maximum* 10,000; with that number, and a large quantity of arms and ammunition, we knew that an Irish army could be formed and disciplined; this, aided by the universal wish of the people to shake off the yoke, we had no doubt would succeed; and we were always solicitous that no foreign force should be able to dictate in our country: Liberty and national independence being our object, we never meant to engage in a struggle for a change of masters.

Lord Chancellor. Was not your object a separation from England?

Mac Neven.

Mac Neven. It certainly became our object, when we were convinced that liberty was not otherwise attainable; our reasons for this determination are given in the memoir; it as a measure we were forced into, inasmuch as I am now, and always have been of opinion, that if we were an independent republic, and Britain ceased to be formidable to us, our interest would require an intimate connexion with her.

Lord Chancellor. Such as subsists between England and America?

Mac Neven. Something like it, my Lord.

Archbishop of Cashel. In plain English, that Ireland should stand on her own bottom, and trade with every other country, just according as she found it would be her interest?

Mac Neven. Precisely, my Lord; I have not, I own, any idea of sacrificing the interests of Ireland to those of any other country; nor why we should not, in that, and in every respect, be as free as the English themselves.

Archbishop of Cashel. Ireland could not support herself alone.

Mac Neven. In my opinion she could; and if once her own mistress, would be invincible against England and France together; but this, my Lord, is a combination never to be expected. If necessary, I could bring as many proofs in support of this opinion, as a thing admits of, which may be only supported or or opposed by probabilities.

Lord Kilwarden. Had the north any intention of rising in rebellion in the summer of 1797?

Mac Neven.

Mac Neven. It had an intention of rising in arms after General Lake's proclamation.

Lord Kilwarden. What prevented it?

Mac Neven. The people of the north were made acquainted with assurances received about this time from France, that the expected succours would be shortly sent to us; and it was represented to them that we would be giving the English a great advantage by beginning before they arrived. For this, as well as other reasons, I was always averse to our beginning by ourselves.

Lord Kilwarden. Then if you thought you would have succeeded, you would have begun?

Mac Neven. Most probably we should; at the same time I am bound to declare, that it was our wish to act with French aid, because that would tend to make the revolution less bloody, by determining many to join in it early, who, while the balance of success was doubtful, would either retain an injurious neutrality, or even perhaps oppose it.

Lord Kilwarden. The Union held out to the poor an assurance that their condition would be ameliorated: how was this to be accomplished?

Mac Neven. In the first place, by an abolition of tythes; and in the next, by establishing such an order of things as would give more free scope to their industry, and secure to them a better recompence for it.

Archbishop of Cashel. You know very well if tythes were abolished, the landlords would raise the rents, and the tenants would not be benefited.

Mac Nevin. I know, my Lord, that during the period of the lease, at least, there would be no such rise; but that now, year after year, there is not a single improvement made by the tenant, without the parson's getting a proportion of the profits; it is a tax which encreases in proportion to the tenant's industry, and encroaches on his capital, in order to form an income for a man to whom he is not indebted for any service; and in general there is the loss of the full tenth between the incumbent and his proctor.

Archbishop of Cashel. Can you account for the massacres committed upon the protestants by the papists in the county of Wexford?

Mac Neven. My Lord, I am far from being the apologist of massacres, however provoked; but if I am rightly informed as to the conduct of the magistrates of that county, the massacres you allude to were acts of retalliation upon enemies, much more than of fanaticism: moreover my Lord, it has been the misfortune of this country, scarcely ever to have known the English natives or settlers, otherwise than as enemies; and in his language, the Irish peasant has but one name for protestant and Englishman, and confounds them; he calls both by the name of *Sasanagh;* his indignation, therefore, is *less against a religionist* than against a *foe;* his prejudice is the effect of the ignorance he is kept in, and the treatment he receives. How can we be surprized at it, when so much pains are taken to brutalize him?

Lord Chancellor. I agree with Dr. Mac Neven; the Irish peasant considers the two words as synonimous; he calls the protestant and Englishman, indifferently, *Sasanagh.*

Lord Kilwarden. I suppose the religious establishment would be abolished with the tythes?

Mac Neven.

Mac Neven. I suppose it would.

Lord Kilwarden. Would you not set up another?

Mac Neven. No, indeed.

Lord Kilwarden. Not the Roman Catholic?

Mac Neven. I would no more consent to that than I would to the establishment of *Mahometanism.*

Lord Kilwarden. What would you do then?

Mac Neven. That which they do in America? let each man profess the religion of his conscience, and pay his own pastor.

Lord Chancellor. Do you think the mass of the people in the provinces of Leinster, Munster and Connaught, care the value of this pen, or the drop of ink it contains, for parliamentary reform or catholic emancipation?

Mac Neven. I am sure they do not [if by the mass of the people your lordship means the common illiterate people; they do not understand it.] What they very well understand is, that it would be a very great advantage to them to be relieved from the payment of tythes, [and not to be fleeced by their landlords; but there is not a man who can read a newspaper, who has not considered the question of reform, and was not once at least attached to that measure; the people of the least education understand it; and why the common people, whose opinion on every other occasion is so little valued, should be made the criterion of public opinion on this, I do not know.]*

* All that part of the answer inclosed within brackets, has been purposely omitted in the published report of the secret committee of the house of lords. Here, where the entire answer is set down, the effect of the suppression in altering the sense is manifest. But long before, Sydney was forced

Lord Chancellor. I dare say they all understand it better than I do?

Mac Neven. As to catholic emancipation, the importance of that question has passed away long since; it really is not worth a moment's thought at the present period.

Lord Dillon. Has the Union extended much into Connaught?

Mac Neven. It has, very considerably.

Lord Dillon. I did not think so. What is the extent of the organization?

Mac Neven. Less, perhaps, than in other places; it got later into Connaught, but very great numbers have taken the test. From the misery of the poor people, and the oppressiveness of landlords in many parts of that province, we have no doubt but if the French ever land in force there, they will be joined by thousands, probably by the whole of its population.

Archbishop of Cashel. If the French had made peace at Lisle, as you say they were willing to do, they would have left you in the lurch; and may they not do so again?

Mac Neven. The French government declared that it would not deceive the Irish; and that it must make peace if England offered such terms as France had a right to expect; but that if the insincerity of the cabinet of St. James's should frustrate the negotiation, the Irish should never be abandoned; and I now consider

forced to observe to another corrupt judge, that if he took the Scripture by pieces, he would make all the penmen of the Scripture blasphemers. He might accuse David of saying there was no God; and accuse the Evangelists of saying Christ was a blasphemer and a seducer; and the Apostles that they were drunk.

consider the directory as bound by every tie of honour never to make peace until we are an independent nation.

Archbishop of Cashel. What security have you that the French would not keep this country as a conquest?

Mac Neven. Their interest and our power: if they attempted any such thing, they must know that England would not fail to take advantage of it; that she would then begin to get a sense of justice towards Ireland, and make us any offer short of separation, as she did to America, when by a like assistance America was enabled to shake off her yoke; moreover, it is not possible for the French to send any force into this country, which would not be at the mercy of its inhabitants; but the example which was held out to them, and to which they promised to conform, was that of Rochambeau in America.

A member of the Committee. To what number do you think the United Irishmen amounted all over the kingdom?

Mac Neven. Those who have taken the test, do not, I am convinced, fall short of 500,000, without reckoning women and old men. The number regularly organized, is not less than 300,000; and I have no doubt all these will be ready to fight for the liberties of Ireland, when they get a fair opportunity.

Lord Chancellor. We shall not trouble you with any more questions.

THE

THE EXAMINATION

OF

WILLIAM JAMES MAC NEVEN,

BEFORE THE SECRET COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS,

AUGUST 8, 1798.

Lord Castlereagh. DR. MAC NEVEN, the Lords have sent us the minutes of your examination before them, and we only wish to trouble you with some questions relative to the interior state of the country.

Speaker. Pray, sir, what do you think occasioned the insurrection?

Mac Neven. The insurrection was occasioned by the house-burnings, the whippings to extort confessions, the torture of various kinds, the free quarters, and the murders committed upon the people by the magistrates and the army.

Speaker. This only took place since the insurrection.

Mac Neven. It is more than twelve months (looking at Mr. Corry) since these horrors were perpetrated by the Antient Britons about Newry; and long before the insurrection they were quite common through the counties of Kildare and Carlow,

Carlow, and began to be practised with very great activity in the counties of Wicklow and Wexford.

Corry and Latouche. Yes, a few houses were burned.

Mac Neven. Gentlemen, there were a great deal more than few houses burned.

Speaker. Would not the organization have gone on, and the Union become much stronger, but that the insurrection was brought forward too soon?

Mac Neven. The organization would have proceeded, and the Union have acquired that strength which arises from order; organization would at the same time have given a controul over the people, capable of restraining their excesses; and you see scarcely any have been committed in those counties where it was well established.

Lord Castlereagh. You acknowledge the Union would have become stronger, *but for the means taken to make it explode.*

Mac Neven. It would every day have become more perfect, but I do not see any thing in what has happened to deter the people from persevering in the Union and its object; on the contrary, if I am rightly informed, the trial of force must tend to give the people confidence in their own power—as I understand it is now admitted, that if the insurrection was general, and well conducted, it would have been successful.

Sir J. Parnel. Do you know the population of Wexford county?

Mac Neven. Not exactly; but people agree, that if the insurrection of a few counties in Leinster, unskilfully as it was directed,

directed, was so near overthrowing the government, a general rising would have freed Ireland.

Lord Castlereagh. Were not the different measures of the government, which are complained of, subsequent to various proceedings of the United Irishmen?

Mac Neven. Prior, my Lord, to most of them; if your lordship desires it, I will prove, by comparison of dates, that government throughout has been the aggressor.—*(His lordship was not curious.)*

Speaker, (looking at the minutes from the Lords.) You say that you wished to keep back the insurrection; how do you reconcile that with the general plan of arming?

Mac Neven. From the time we had given up reform as hopeless, and determined to receive the French, we adopted a military organization, and prepared to be in a condition to cooperate wth them; but it was always our wish to wait, if possible, their arrival. We wished to see liberty established in our country with the least possible expence of private happiness, and in such a way that no honest man of either party should have cause to regret it. We had before our eyes the revolution of 1688, in which a popular general, with only a small army, gave the friends of liberty an opportunity of declaring themselves; accordingly, upon that celebrated occasion, the junction of the people of England with King William was so extensive, that war and its concomitant evils were entirely precluded. I know the case would be the same here if there was a French landing.

Mr. Alexander. Although talents and education are to be found in the Union, yet there is no comparison in point of property between those who invited the French, and those who brought in King William.

Mac Neven.

Mac Neven. Pardon me, sir, I know very many who possess propably much larger properties than did Lord Danby, who signed the invitation to the Prince of Orange, or than did Lord Somers, who was the great champion of the revolution. The property in the Union is immense; but persons in a situation to be more easily watched, were not required to render themselves particularly conspicuous.

Speaker. But in case of a revolution, would not many persons be banished or destroyed, and their properties forfeited—for instance, the gentlemen here?

Mac Neven. We never had a doubt, but in such an event, many of those who profess to be the warmest friends of the British connexion, would very quickly join us; and the readiness with which we have seen them support different other administrations, led us to suppose they might possibly do us the HONOUR of supporting our own. I am confident, sir, that in case of a revolution, the United Irishmen would behave better to their enemies, than their enemies do to them.

Speaker. Was not the *Olive Branch*, and the arms she had on board, destined for this country?

Mac Neven. I never heard they were; arms have been frequently offered, but we always refused to accept them, without troops; for we knew that insurrection would be the immediate consequence of a landing of arms, and we constantly declared to the French government, that we never meant to make our country a La Vendee, or the seat of Chouanerie.

Speaker. Do you think catholic emancipation or parliamentary reform are objects of any importance with the common people?

Mac Neven. Catholic emancipation, as it is called, the people do not care about; I am sure they ought not now; they know, I believe, very generally, that it would be attended with no other effect than to admit into the house of peers a few individuals who profess the catholic religion, and enable some others to speculate in seats in the house of commons. No man is so ignorant as to think this would be a national benefit. When Lord Fitzwilliam was here, I considered the measure a good one, as it would have removed the pretexts of those feuds and animosities which have desolated Ireland for two centuries, and have been lately so unhappily exacerbated; but now that those evils have occurred, which the stay of that nobleman would have prevented, they are not little measures which can remedy the grievances of this country.

[*Speaker*, looking over at somebody. See that.]

Speaker. But are you not satisfied, that reform would go as little way to content the people, as catholic emancipation?

Mac Neven. Sir, I can best answer that question by declaring what the sentiments of the United Irishmen were at different periods. When Mr. Ponsonby brought in his first bill of reform, I remember having conversed with some of the most confidential men in the north on that subject—and they declared to me, they would think the country happy, and likely to think itself so, by getting that bill. When he brought in his last bill, I am sure the country at large would have been satisfied with the same.

Lord Castlereagh. They would have been satisfied to effect a revolution through a reform?

Mac Neven. If a change of system be one way or other inevitable, of which I have no doubt, and which you yourselves cannot

cannot but think highly probable, who can be so much interested in its occurring peaceably as you are; in any tranquil change, you will retain your properties, and the immense influence which attaches to property; in such a situation, you would necessarily have a considerable share in the management of affairs; and I cannot conceive how a revolution, effected in such a manner, would much confound the order of society, or give any considerable shock to private happiness.

Speaker. Don't you think the people would be dissatisfied with any reformed parliament which would not abolish the church establishment and tythes?

Mac Neven. I have no idea of a reformed parliament that would not act according to the interest and known wishes of the people. I am clear that tythes ought to be suppressed, and have no doubt the church establishment would follow.

A member. Would you not set up another?

Mac Neven. Most certainly not; I consider all church establishments as injurious to liberty and religion.

Mr. J. C. Beresford. Will you tell me what you understand by a free house of commons?

Mac Neven. One which should be annually and freely returned by the people, and in which their interests, for the most part, should direct the decisions.

Mr. J. C. Beresford. What do you think of Potwollopping boroughs—they afford a specimen of universal suffrage?

Mac Neven. I know some adversaries of reform who have less reason to be displeased with them than I have, but they are

a proof how useless would be any partial reform, and that a thing may be noxious in a detached state, which would form a valuable part of a good system.

A member. It seems we are reduced to the unfortunate situation of not being able to content the people without a reform, which would overthrow the church establishment, and break the connexion with England?

Mac Neven. If you be in that situation, give me leave to tell you, it was brought on by the perseverance with which every species of reform has always been refused, and the contumely manifested towards those who petitioned for it.—Discussion was provoked by this treatment, and resentment excited: the consequences of which are now, that the people would probably exercise to its full extent whatever privilege they acquired, though if timely granted, they would stop far short of the length to which it might be carried; this is the nature of man; but, sir, I see no necessary connexion between the fall of the establishment and a separation from England.

Speaker. Sure if the head of the church was removed, the connexion would be broken?

Mac Neven. It might be preserved through the king, if the Irish thought proper to retain it. As the parliament now exists, with two-thirds of it (if I may be allowed to speak frankly) the property of individuals in the pay of the British cabinet, the connexion is indeed injurious to Ireland, and it is rendered so by the parliament; but if we had a free parliament, there might be a federal connexion advantageous to both countries.

Sir J. Parnel. Under that federal connexion, Ireland would not go to war when England pleased.

Mac Neven. I hope not. Were the connexion of this nature, it would probably have preserved England from the present war, and rendered her the same kind of service which might be expected from a free house of commons, if she had one.

A member. What has hitherto prevented the French from invading this country?

Mac Neven. Nothing, I am sure, but inability; this, however, will not always last; and I have not the least doubt but, when it passes off, they will invade it, unless by a change of system you content the nation, and arm it against them; it will then defend itself, as it did before by its volunteers.

Speaker. What system?

Mac Neven. A system of coercion, and a system of injustice; to be replaced by a system of freedom.

Sir J. Parnel. Would you not be disposed, as well as other gentlemen who may have influence with the people, to exert it, in order to induce them to give up their arms, without the intervention of force?

Mac Neven. I cannot answer that question, unless I am told what equivalent is meant to be given them for such a surrender.

Sir J. Parnel. Pardon.

Mac Neven. They never considered it a crime to have arms, nor do I; on the contrary, they have been taught, and know it is a right of theirs, to possess them. If any attempt is made to take from them their arms, they will mistrust the motive, and think,

think, not without reason, that it is intended by such conduct to leave them naked, at the mercy of their enemies.

Sir J. Parnel. Pikes are horrible weapons, and I don't know but a law might be passed against them.

Mac Neven. I am sure I have seen as strange laws passed without any difficulty; but one might equally as well be made against muskets and bayonets.

Sir J. Parnel. But pikes are not in the contemplation of the law which gives the subject the right of possessing arms.

Mac Neven. I believe, Sir John, the law which declares that right to belong to every freeman, was partly obtained by the pike.

Speaker. It was Magna Charta.

Lord Castlereagh. What is likely to be the effect of the insurrection that has been just put down?

Mac Neven. It will teach the people that caution which some of their friends less successfully endeavoured to inculcate; and I am afraid it will make them retaliate with a dreadful revenge the cruelties they suffered, whenever they have an opportunity.

Lord Castlereagh. Will they, do you think, rise again?

Mac Neven. Not, I believe, till the French come; but then most assuredly, wherever they can join them.

Speaker. Will the people consider themselves bound hereafter by the oaths of the Union?

Mac

Mac Neven. I suppose they will.

Speaker. Would you?

Mac Neven. I, who am going to become an emigrant from my country, am dispensed from answering that question; yet I acknowledge, were I to stay, I would think myself bound by them; nor can I discover any thing in what has passed, to make it less my duty.

Speaker Aye, you consider a republican government more economical.

Mac Neven. Corruption is not necessary to it.

Speaker. How did you mean to pay the loan from Spain; I suppose from our forfeited estates?

Mac Neven. Rather, sir, from your places and pensions. If I only take the pension list at £100,000 (it has been considerably higher, and I believe is so still) that alone would be sufficient to pay the interest of four times the half million we meant to borrow. I need not tell you that money can be got, when the interest can be regularly paid. We conceive also there are several places with large salaries, for which the present possessors do no other service than giving votes in parliament; another considerable fund would, we imagine, be found by giving these sums a different application.

Speaker. Do you remember Mr. Grattan's motion about tythes—was not that a short cut towards putting down the established church?

Mac Neven. If the stability of the established church depends on the payment of tythes, the church stands on a weaker foundation

foundation than in civility I would have said of it; but sure I am, sir, that if tythes had been commuted according to Mr. Grattan's plan, a very powerful engine would have been taken out of our hands.

A Member. Is not the Union much indebted to the Roman catholic clergy?

Mac Neven. The principle of burying all religious differences in oblivion, was warmly embraced by the catholic clergy; some of them became more active members of the Union, and I make no doubt but they are in general well affected to the liberties of their country.

Speaker. Have not the Priests a great influence over the people?

Mac Neven. When they espouse the interests of the people, they are readily obeyed by them, from the reliance that is placed on their better sense and education; when they oppose these interests, they are certainly found to have neither authority nor influence; of this I can give you two important examples. At the time the catholic committee was opposed by the *sixty-eight*, together with Lord Kenmare and his *marksmen*, a priest, between Kilbeggan and Moate, who endeavoured to seduce his flock to support the slavish principles of that party, was well nigh *hanged* by his own parishioners, for what they deemed treachery to their interests. The other, a priest in the north, who thought fit to preach against the Union: the flock immediately left the chapel, and sent him word they would for that Sunday go to the meeting-house; and that if he did not desist from such politics in future, they would come near him no more. Of such a nature, gentlemen, is the influence of the catholic clergy.

Speaker.

Speaker. Are the bishops much looked up to?

Mac Neven. They are not as far as I can learn, so well beloved, nor so much confided in by the people as the inferior clergy.

Speaker. Can you assign any reason for that?

Mac Neven. I am inclined to believe it is because they are seen so much about the castle, and because some acts coming from that body have manifested an over extraordinary complaisance for the supposed wishes of government.

Speaker. Did you see Dr. Hussey's letter—what do you think of that?

Mac Neven. I have seen it, and disapprove of it. As one name and paper is mentioned, I cannot help saying that I have seen another letter, with the name of Dr. Moylan, which contained a remarkable falsehood in favour of the administration; but as this was only a pious fraud perhaps, I could never hear that they complained of it.

Lord Castlereagh. We will detain you no longer.

SUBSTANCE

OF

THOMAS ADDIS EMMET'S EXAMINATION,

BEFORE THE SECRET COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS,

AUGUST 10, 1798.

Committee. WERE you an United Irishman?

Emmet. My Lords, I AM one.

Com. Were you a member of the executive?

Emmet. I was of the executive from the month of January to the month of May, 1797, and afterwards from December, 1797, 'till I was arrested.

[I was then asked as to the military organization, which I detailed.—They then asked when the returns included fire arms and ammunition.]

Emmet. After the insurrection and indemnity acts had been passed, when the people were led to think on resistance, and after 4000 persons had been driven from the county of Armagh by the Orangemen.

Com.

Com. Was not the name of Orangeman used to terrify the people into the United system?

Emmet. I do not know what groundless fears may have been propagated by ignorant people; but I am sure no unfair advantage was taken by the executive. The Orange principles were fairly discussed, as far as they were known, and we always found, that wherever it was attempted to establish a lodge, the United Irish encreased very much.

Lord Dillon. Why, where was it endeavoured to introduce them, except in the north, and the city of Dublin?

Emmet. My Lord, I can't tell you all the places in which it was endeavoured, but I will name one, in the county of Roscommon, where I am told it made many United Irishmen.

Lord Dillon. Well, that was but very lately, and I endeavoured to resist it.

Com. When were the first communications with France?

Emmet. The first I heard of were after the insurrection and indemnity acts had been carried; the first I knew of was after the French fleet had left Bantry Bay, and after it was manifest the effort for reform would not succeed: and permit me to add, on my oath, it was my intention to propose to, and from conversations I had with some of the executive directory, I am sure it would have been carried there, that if there had been any reasonable hope of reform being adopted, to send one more messenger to France, and he should have told them the difference between the people and the government was adjusted, and not to attempt a second invasion.

[They then took me into detail through the whole of the negotiations and message—I stated that the demand on our part was from five to ten thousand men, and forty thousand stand of arms, by the first agent; that the instructions to the second agent differed by requesting more arms in consequence of the disarming of the north, which had intervened, and that the French had promised we should be at perfect liberty to choose our own form of government. It was expressly stipulated with them that they should conduct themselves so.]

Lord Chancellor. As they did in Holland?

Emmet. As Rochambeau did in America, my lords.

They then entered on the subject of the separation.

Lord Chancellor. How is it possible, Mr. Emmet, just look on the map, and tell me how you can suppose that Ireland could exist independent of England or France?

Emmet. My lords, if I had any doubt on that subject, I should never have attempted to effect a separation, but I have given it as much consideration as my faculties would permit, and I have not a shadow of doubt, that if Ireland was once independent, she might defy the combined efforts of France and England.

Archbishop of Cashel. My God! her trade would be destroyed!

Emmet. Pardon me, my lord, her trade would be infinitely encreased: 150 years ago, when Ireland contained not more than one million and an half of men, and America was nothing, the connexion might be said to be necessary to Ireland, but now that she contains five millions, and America is the best market in the world, and Ireland the best situated country in Europe

Europe to trade with that market, she has outgrown the connexion.

Lord Chancellor. Yes, I remember talking to a gentleman of your acquaintance, and I believe one of your body and way of thinking, who told me that Ireland had nothing to complain of from England; but that she was strong enough to set up for herself.

Emmet. I beg, my lords, that may not be considered as my opinion: I think Ireland has a great many things to complain of against England: I am sure she is strong enough to set up for herself; and give me leave to tell you, my lords, that if the government of this country be not regulated so as that the control may be wholly Irish, and that the commercial arrangements between the two countries be not put on the footing of perfect equality, the connexion cannot last.

Lord Chancellor. What would you do for coals?

Emmet. In every revolution, and in every war, the people must submit to some privations; but I must observe to your lordships, there is a reciprocity between the buyer and the seller, and that England would suffer as much as Ireland, if we did not buy her coals. However, I will grant our fuel would become dearer for a time; but by paying a higher price we could have a full sufficient abundance from our own coal mines, and from bogs, by means of our canals.

Archbishop of Cashel. Why, twelve frigates would stop up all our ports.

Emmet. My lord, you must have taken a very imperfect survey of the ports on the western coasts of this kingdom, if you suppose that twelve frigates would block them up; and I must observe

observe to you, that if Ireland was for three months separated from England, the latter would cease to be such a formidable naval power.

Lord Chancellor. Well, I conceive the separation could not last twelve hours.

Emmet. I declare it to God, I think that if Ireland was separated from England she would be the happiest spot on the face of the globe.

[At which they all seemed much astonished.]

Lord Chancellor. But how could you rely on France that she would keep her promise of not interfering with your government?

Emmet. My reliance, my lords, was more on Irish prowess, than on French promises; for I was convinced, that though she could not easily set up the standard herself, yet, when it was once raised, a very powerful army would flock to it, which, organized under its own officers, would have no reason to dread 100,000 Frenchmen, and we only stipulated for a tenth part of that number.

Lord Kilwarden. You seem averse to insurrection; I suppose it was because you thought it impolitic?

Emmet. Unquestionably: for if I imagined an insurrection could have succeeded without a great waste of blood and time, I should have preferred it to invasion, as it would not have exposed us to the chance of contributions being required by a foreign force; but as I did not think so, and as I was certain an invasion would succeed speedily, and without much struggle, I preferred

ferred it even at the hazard of that inconvenience, which we took every pains to prevent.

Lord Dillon. Mr. Emmet, you have stated the views of the executive to be very liberal and very enlightened, and I believe yours were so; but let me ask you, whether it was not intended to cut off (in the beginning of the contest) the leaders of the opposition party by a summary mode, such as assassination: my reason for asking you is, John Sheares's proclamation, the most terrible paper that ever appeared in any country: it says, that "many of your tyrants have bled, and others must bleed," &c.

Emmet. My lords, as to Mr. Sheares's proclamation, he was not of the executive when I was.

Lord Chancellor. He was of the new executive.

Emmet. I do not know he was of any executive, except from what your lordship says—but I believe he was joined with some others in framing a particular plan of insurrection for Dublin and its neighbourhood—neither do I know what value he annexed to those words in his proclamation—but I can answer, that while I was of the executive, there was no such design, but the contrary—for we conceived when one of you lost your lives, we lost an hostage. Our intention was to seize you all, and keep you as hostages for the conduct of England; and after the revolution was over, if you could not live under the new government, to send you out of the country. I will add one thing more, which, though it is not an answer to your question, you may have a curiosity to hear. In such a struggle, it was natural to expect confiscations; our intention was, that every wife who had not instigated her husband to resistance, should be provided for out of the property, notwithstanding confiscations; and every child who was too young to

to be his own master, or form his own opinion, was to have a child's portion. Your lordships will now judge how far we intended to be cruel.

Lord Chancellor. Pray, Mr. Emmet, what caused the late insurrection?

Emmet. The free quarters, the house-burnings, the tortures, and the military executions, in the counties of Kildare, Carlow, and Wicklow.

Lord Chancellor. Don't you think the arrests of the 12th of March caused it?

Emmet. No; but I believe if it had not been for these arrests, it would not have taken place; for the people, irritated by what they suffered, had been long pressing the executive to consent to an insurrection, but they had resisted or eluded it, and even determined to persevere in the same line; after these arrests, however, other persons came forward, who were irritated, and thought differently, who consented to let that partial insurrection take place.

Lord Chancellor. Were all the executive arrested or put to flight by the arrests of the 12th of March?

Emmet. Your lordships will excuse my answering to that question, as it would point out individuals.

Lord Chancellor. Did you not think the government very foolish to let you proceed so long as they did?

Emmet. No, my lord; whatever I imputed to government, I did not accuse them of folly. I knew we were very attentively watched, but I thought they were right in letting us proceed. I have

I have often said, laughing among ourselves, that if they did right, they would pay us for conducting the revolution, conceiving as I then did, and now do, that a revolution is inevitable, unless speedily prevented by very large measures of conciliation. It seemed to me an object with them, that it should be conducted by moderate men, of good moral characters, liberal eduction, and some talents, rather than by intemperate men of bad characters, ignorant, and foolish; and into the hands of one or other of those classes it undoubtedly will fall. I also imagined the members of government might be sensible of the difference between the change of their situation being effected by a sudden and violent convulsion, or by the more gradual measures of a well conducted revolution, if it were effected suddenly by an insurrecton—and I need not tell your lordships, that had there been a general plan of acting, and the north had co-operated with Leinster, the last insurrection would have infallibly and rapidly succeeded; in such case, you would be tumbled at once from your pinnacle; but if a revolution were gradually accomplished, you would have had time to accommodate, and habituate yourselves to your new situation. For these reasons, I imagined government did not wish to irritate and push things forward.

Lord Chancellor. Pray, do you think catholic emancipation and parliamentary reform any objects with the common people?

Emmet. As to catholic emancipation, I don't think it matters a feather, or that the poor think of it. As to parliamentary reform, I don't think the common people ever thought of it, until it was inculcated to them that a reform would cause a removal of those grievances which they actually do feel. From that time, I believe, they have become very much attached to the measure.

Lord Chancellor. And do you think that idea has been successfully inculcated into the common people?

Emmet. It has not been my fortune to communicate much with them on that subject, so that I cannot undertake to say how far it has been successfully inculcated into them; but of this I am certain, that since the establishment of the United Irish system, it has been inculcated into all the middling classes, and much more among the common people, than ever it was before.

Lord Chancellor. And what grievances would such a reformed legislature remove?

Emmet. In the first place, it would cause a complete abolition of tythes: in the next, by giving the common people an encreased value in the democracy, it would better their situation, and make them more respected by their superiors; the condition of the poor would be ameliorated; and what is perhaps of more consequence than all the rest, a system of national education would be established.

Lord Dillon. The abolition of tythes would be a very good thing; but don't you think it would be more beneficial to the landlords than the tenants?

Archbishop of Cashel. Aye, it is they would benefit by it.

Emmet. My lords, I am ready to grant, that if tythes were now abolished, without a reform, there are landlords who would raise the rent on their tenants, when they were making new leases, the full value of the tythes, and, if they could, more; but if a reform succeeded the abolition of tythes, such a reformed legislature would very badly know, or very badly perform its duty, if it did not establish such a system of landed tenures as would prevent landlords from doing so; and let me tell your lordships, that

that if a revolution ever takes place, a very different system of political economy will be established, from what has hitherto prevailed here.

Lord Glentworth. Then your intention was to destroy the church?

Emmet. Pardon me, my lord, my intention never was to destroy the church. My wish decidedly was to overturn the establishment.

Lord Dillon. I understand you—and have it as it is in France?

Emmet. As it is in America, my lords.

Lord Kilwarden. Pray, Mr. Emmet, do you know of any communications with France since your arrest?

Emmet. I do, my lord, Mr. Cooke told me of one.

Lord Kilwarden. But don't you know in any other way, whether communications are still going on between this country and France?

Emmet. No; but I have no doubt that even after we shall have left this country, there will remain among the 500,000 and upwards which compose the Union, many persons of sufficient talents, enterprize, enthusiasm, and opportunity, who will continue the old, or open a new communication with France, if it shall be necessary; and in looking over, in my own mind, the persons whom I know of most talents and enterprize, I cannot help suggesting to myself the persons I think most likely to do so; but I must be excused pointing at them.

THOMAS ADDIS EMMET.

THE EXAMINATION

OF

THOMAS ADDIS EMMET,

BEFORE THE SECRET COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS,

AUGUST 14, 1798.

LORD CASTLEREAGH mentioned that the minutes of my examination before the lords had been transmitted to them, and that they only wanted to ask me a few questions in explanation of those minutes. The general turn of the examination was therefore the same as that before the upper house; but I could observe much more manifestly this time than before, a design, out of my answers, to draw the conclusion that nothing would content the people but such changes as would be a departure from what they choose to call the English constitution, and the English system; and therefore I presume they meant to infer, that the popular claims must be resisted at all hazards.—The Speaker seemed to me to take the lead in conducting the investigation to this point.

Lord Castlereagh. Mr. Emmet, you said in your examination before the lords, that the French had not made known the place

place where they intended landing; how then will you explain an address which we have here, stating that the French were shortly expected in Bantry Bay?

Emmet. My Lord, I know nothing at present of that address; but I suppose on farther enquiry it will be found to be some mistake, as I am positive they never mentioned Bantry Bay in any communication; I know, on the contrary, Galway Bay was looked on as the probable place of their landing.

N. B. I find, upon inquiry, that address is without a date, and was written after the French had disappeared from Bantry Bay, and were generally expected to return.

Mr. Alexander. I have here some resolutions, *(which he read, and which, among other things, spoke of the extent of the confiscations that would be made in the event of a revolution, and how they should be applied)*—do you know any thing of them?

Emmet. I have a recollection of having read them before; and if that recollection be right, they are resolutions that have been passed by an individual society at Belfast, and were seized at the arrests of Barrett, Burnside, and others.

Mr. Alexander. They are the same.

Emmet. Then I hope the committee will draw no inference from them as to the views of the executive or of the whole body. You know the north well, and that every man there turns his mind more or less on speculative politics; but certainly the opinion of a few of the least informed among them cannot be considered as influencing the whole.

Mr. J. C. Beresford. Aye, but would you be able to make such people give up their own opinion, to follow yours?

Emmet.

Emmet. I am convinced we should; because I know we have done it before, on points where their opinions and wishes were very strong.

Mr. Alexander. How did you hope to hold the people in order and good conduct when the reins of government were loosened?

Emmet. By other equally powerful reins. It was for this purpose that I considered the promoting of organization to be a moral duty. Having no doubt that a revolution would, and will take place, unless prevented by removing the national grievances, I saw in the organization the only way of preventing its being such as would give the nation lasting causes of grief and shame. Whether there be organization or not, the revolution will take place; but if the people be classed and arranged for the purpose, the control which heads of their own appointment will have over them, by means of the different degrees of representation, and organs of communication, will, I hope, prevent them from committing those acts of outrage and cruelty which may be expected from a justly irritated, but ignorant and uncontroled populace.

Mr. Alexander. But do you think there were in the Union such organs of communication as had an influence over the lower orders, and were at the same time fit to communicate and do business with persons of a better condition?

Emmet. I am sure there were multitudes of extremely shrewd and sensible men, whose habits of living were with the lower orders, but who were perfectly well qualified for doing business with persons of any condition.

Speaker. You say the number of United Irishmen is five hundred thousand—do you look upon them all as fighting men?

Emmet.

Emmet. There are undoubtedly some old men and some young lads among them; but I am sure I speak within bounds when I say the number of fighting men in the Union cannot be less than three hundred thousand.

Speaker. I understand, according to you, the views of the United Irish went to a republic and separation from England; but they would probably have compounded for a reform in parliament. Am I not right, however, in understanding that *the object next their hearts* was a separation and a republic?

Emmet. Pardon me, *the object next their hearts* was a redress of their grievances; two modes of accomplishing that object presented themselves to their view; one was a reform by peaceable means, the other was a revolution and republic. I have no doubt but that if they could have flattered themselves that *the object next their hearts* would be accomplished peaceably, by a reform, they would prefer it infinitely to a revolution and republic, which must be more bloody in their operation; but I am also convinced, when they saw they could not accomplish the object next their hearts, a redress of their grievances, by a reform, they determined in despair to procure it by a revolution, which I am persuaded is inevitable, unless a reform be granted.

Speaker. You say that a revolution is inevitable, unless a reform be granted: what would be the consequence of such a reform in redressing what you call the grievances of the people?

Emmet. In the first place, I look to the abolition of tythes. I think such a reformed legislature would also produce an amelioration of the state of the poor, and a diminution of the rents of lands, would establish a system of national education, would regulate the commercial intercourse between Great Britain and Ireland,

Ireland, on the footing of perfect equality, and correct the bloody nature of your criminal code.

Speaker. You speak of the abolition of tythes; do you include in that the destruction of the establishment?

Emmet. I have myself no doubt of the establishment's being injurious, and I look to its destruction; but I cannot undertake to say how far the whole of that measure is contemplated by the body of the people, because I have frequently heard an acreable tax proposed as a substitute, which necessarily supposes the preservation of the establishment.

Speaker. Don't you think the catholics peculiarly object to tythes?

Emmet. They certainly have the best reason to complain, but I rather think they object as tenants more than as catholics, and in common with the rest of the tenantry of the kingdom; and if any other way of paying even a protestant establishment, which did not bear so sensibly on their industry, were to take place, I believe it would go a great way to content them; though I confess it would not content me; but I must add, that I would (and I am sure so would many others who think of establishments like me) consent to give the present incumbents equivalent pensions.

Lord Castlereagh. Don't you think the catholics look to accomplishing the destruction of the establishment?

Emmet. From the declaration they made in 1792, or 1793, I am sure they did not then; I cannot say how far their opinions may have altered since, but from many among them proposing a substitute for tythes, I am led to believe they may not yet be gone so far.

Lord

Lord Castlereagh. But don't you think they will look to its destruction?

Emmet. I cannot pay so bad a compliment to the reasons which have convinced myself, as not to suppose they will convince others. As the human mind grows *philosophic*, it will, I think, wish for the destruction of all religious establishments, and therefore, in proportion as the catholic mind becomes *philosophic*, it will of course entertain the same wishes—but I consider that as the result of its *philosophy*, and not of its religion.

Lord Castlereagh. Don't you think the catholics would wish to set up a catholic establishment, in lieu of the protestant one?

Emmet. Indeed I don't, even at the present day; perhaps some old priests, who have long groaned under the penal laws, might wish for a retribution to themselves—but I don't think the young priests wish for it, and I am convinced the laity would not submit to it, and that the objections to it will be every day gaining strength.

Speaker. You also mention that a reform would diminish the rents of lands; how do you think that would be done?

Emmet. I am convinced rack rents can only take place in a country otherwise essentially oppressed; if the value of the people was raised in the state, their importance would influence the landlords to consult their interests, and therefore to better their condition. Thus I think it would take place, even without any law bearing upon the matter.

Mr. Alexander. Mr. Emmet, you have gone circuit for many years; now have you not observed that the condition of the people has been gradually bettering?

Emmet. Admitting that the face of the country has assumed a better appearance; if you attribute it to the operation of any laws you have passed, I must only declare my opinion, it is *post hoc sed non ex hoc.* As far as the situation of the lower orders has been bettered in Ireland, it results from the encreased knowledge, commerce, and intercourse of the different states of Europe with one another, and is enjoyed in this country only in common with the rest of civilized Europe and America. I believe the lower orders in all those countries have been improved in their condition within these twenty years, but I doubt whether the poor of this kingdom have been bettered in a greater portion than the poor in the despotic states of Germany.

Speaker. You mention an improved system of national education; are there not as many schools in Ireland as in England?

Emmet. I believe there are, and that there is in proportion as great a fund in Ireland as in England, if it were fairly applied; but there is this great difference, the schools are protestant schools, which answer very well in England, but do little good among the catholic peasantry in Ireland.—Another thing to be considered is, that stronger measures are necessary for educating the Irish people than are necessary in England: in the latter country, no steps were taken to counteract the progress of knowledge; it had fair play, and was gradually advancing; but in Ireland you have brutalized the vulgar mind, by long continued operation of the popery laws, which, though they are repealed, have left an effect that will not cease these fifty years. It is incumbent then on you to counteract that effect by measures which are not equally necessary in England.

Speaker. You mentioned the criminal code; in what does that differ from the English?

Emmet.

Emmet. It seems to me, that it would be more adviseable, in reviewing our criminal law, to compare the crime with the punishment, than the Irish code with the English; there is, however, one difference that occurs to me on the instant—administering unlawful oaths is in Ireland punished with death.

Lord Castlereagh. That is a law connected with the security of the state.

Emmet. If it is intended to keep up the ferment of the public mind, such laws may be necessary; but if it be intended to allay the ferment, they are perfectly useless.

Speaker. Would putting the commercial intercourse on the footing of equality, satisfy the people?

Emmet. I think that equality of situations would go nearer satisfying the people than any of the other equalities that have been alluded to.

Speaker. Then your opinion is that we cannot avoid a revolution unless we abandon the English constitution, and the English system in our establishment, education and criminal laws?

Emmet. I have already touched on the latter subjects; as to the English constitution, I cannot conceive how a reform in parliament can be said to destroy that.

Speaker. Why, in what does the representation differ in Ireland from that in England; are there not in England close boroughs, and is not the right of suffrage there confined to 40s. freeholders?

Emmet. If I were an Englishman, I should be discontented, and therefore cannot suppose that putting Ireland on a footing with England would content the people of this country; if, however, you have a mind to try a partial experiment, for the success of which I would not answer, you must consider how many are the close boroughs and large towns which contribute to the appointment of their 558, and diminish in the same proportion the number of the close boroughs and towns which contribute to the appointment of our 300; even that would be a gain to Ireland; but that there should be no mistake, or confusion of terms, let us drop the equivocal words of *English constitution*, and then I answer, I would not be understood to say, that the government, of kings, lords and commons, would be destroyed by a refom of the lower house.

Lord Castlereagh. And don't you think that such a house could not co-exist with the government of king and lords?

Emmet. If it would not, my lord, the eulogies that have been passed on the British constitution are very much misplaced; but I think they could all exist together, if the king and lords meant fairly by the people; if they should persist in designs hostile to the people, I do believe they would be overthrown.

[It was then intimated, that they had got into a theoretical discussion, and that what they wished to enquire into was facts.]

Sir J. Parnel. Mr. Emmet, while you and the executive were philosophising, Lord Edward Fitzgerald was arming and disciplining the people.

Emmet. Lord Edward was a military man, and if he was doing so, he probably thought that was the way in which he could

could be most useful to the country; but I am sure, that if those with whom he acted were convinced that the grievances of the people were redressed, and that force was become unnecessary, he would have been persuaded to drop all arming and disciplining.

Mr. J. C. Beresford. I knew Lord Edward well, and always found him very obstinate.

Emmet. I knew Lord Edward right well, and have done a great deal of business with him, and have always found, when he had a reliance on the integrity and talents of the person he acted with, he was one of the most persuadable men alive—but if he thought a man meant dishonestly or unfairly by him, he was as obstinate as a mule.

[Many questions were then put to me relative to different papers and proceedings of the United Irish; among the rest, John Sheares's proclamation was mentioned with considerable severity. I took that opportunity of declaring, that neither the execution of John Sheares, or the obloquy that was endeavoured to be cast on his memory, should prevent my declaring that I considered John Sheares a very honourable and humane man.]

Mr. French. Mr. Emmet, can you point out any way of inducing the people to give up their arms?

Emmet. Redressing their grievances, and no other.

Lord Castlereagh. Mr. Emmet, we are unwillingly obliged to close this examination by the sitting of the house.

Emmet. My lord, if it be the wish of the committee, I will attend it at any other time.

Lord Castlereagh.

Lord Castlereagh. If we want you, then we shall send for you.

After the regular examination was closed, I was asked by many of the members whether there were many persons of property in the Union. I answered that there was immense property in it. They acknowledged there was great personal property in it, but wished to know was there much landed property; I answered, there was. They asked me was it fee simple; to that I could give no answer. The attorney-general said there was in it many landholders who had large tracts of land, and felt *their* landlords to be great grievances. I admitted that to be the fact. They asked me had we provided any form of government. I told them we had a provisional government for the instant, which we retained in memory; but as to any permanent form of government, we thought that, and many other matters relating to the changes which would become necessary, were not proper objects for our discussion, but should be referred to a committee chosen by the people.

They did not ask what the provisional government was.

AS the discussion created by the following letters has given rise to the present publication, and as their contents are intimately connected with the subject of the preceding pieces, it has been thought advisable to annex them here.

LETTER I.

COPY OF A LETTER FROM MR. RUFUS KING, THE AMERICAN MINISTER AT THE COURT OF LONDON, TO MR. HENRY JACKSON, ONE OF THE IRISH STATE PRISONERS.

"*Brighton, August* 23, 1799.

"SIR,

"I ought to inform you, *that I really have no authority* to give or refuse permission to you or any other foreigner to go to the United States; the admission and residence of strangers in that country being a matter, that, by a late law,* exclusively belongs to the President. It is true that the government of this country, in the course of the last year, *in consequence of my interference*, gave me assurance that a particular description of persons in Ireland, who it was understood were going to the United States, should *not* be allowed to proceed without *our* consent: this restraint would doubtless be withdrawn in favour of individuals against whose emigration *I should not object*; and I conclude, that it is upon this supposition, that you have taken the trouble to communicate to me your desire to go and reside in the United States.—Without presuming to form an opinion on

* The Alien Law.

on the subject of the late disturbances in Ireland, I entertain a distinct one in relation to the political situation of my own country. In common with others, we have felt the influence of the changes that have successively taken place in France, and unfortunately, a portion of our inhabitants has erroneously supposed that our civil and political institutions, as well as our national policy, might be improved by a close imitation of France.—This opinion, the propagation of which was made the duty and became the chief employment of the French agents residing among us, created a more considerable division among our people, and required a greater watchfulness and activity from the government, than could before-hand have been apprehended.

"I am sorry to make the remark, and shall stand in need of your candor in doing so, that a large proportion of the emigrants from Ireland, and especially in the middle states, has, upon this occasion, arranged themselves on the side of the *malcontents*. I ought to except from this remark most of the enlightened and well-educated Irishmen who reside among us, and, with a few exceptions, I might confine it to the indigent and illiterate, who, entertaining an attachment to freedom, are unable to appreciate those salutary restraints without which it degenerates into anarchy. It would be injustice to say that the Irish emigrants are more national than those of other countries, yet being a numerous, though very minor portion of our population, they are capable, from causes it is needless now to explain, of being generally brought to act in concert, and, under artful leaders, may be, as they have been, enlisted in mischievous combinations against our government. This view leads me to state to you without reserve, the hesitation that I have felt in your case; on the one hand, we cannot object to the acquisition of inhabitants from abroad, possessing capital and skill in a branch of business that, with due caution, may, without risque or difficulty, and with public as well as private advantage, be established among us; but, on the other hand, if the opinions of such inhabitants are likely to throw them into the class

class of *malcontents*, their fortune, skill, and consequent influence, would make them tenfold more dangerous, and they might become a disadvantage instead of a benefit to our country. You must be sensible that I possess no sufficient means of forming an opinion respecting your sentiments; but the motives which lead me to interfere with your government to restrain the emigration of the perons above alluded to, oblige me to observe a due caution on the present occasion; at the same time, I desire not to act with illiberality, and should be unwilling to bring upon my country the slightest imputation of inhospitality. What Mr. Wilson* has written, so far as it goes, is satisfactory; and on the whole, I have concluded, after this unreserved communication, which I hope will be received with the same candour as it is made, to inform you, authorizing you to make use of the information, that I withdraw every objection that may be supposed to stand in the way of your being permitted to go to the United States, adding only that you may carry with you an unbiassed mind, may find the state of the country, as I believe you will, favourable to your views of business, and its government deserving your attachment.

"I must beg your excuse for the great delay which has occurred in sending you this answer, which, I assure you, has arisen from other causes than the want of due respect to your letters.

"With great consideration,

"I have the honour to be,

"Sir,

"Your most obedient servant,

"RUFUS KING."

* The American consul in Dublin.

LETTER II.

TO RUFUS KING, ESQ.

SIR,

From certain paragraphs in the Evening Post, I apprehend that it may become necessary for me to obtrude myself on the public. As in that event I should wish to derive some credit from the character of my adversary, I request to be informed whether you purpose submitting to the world any explanation of your interference with the British government, respecting the Irish state prisoners in the year 1798?

I put the question in this way, because I have not the honor of any personal acquaintance with you; because I intend that every thing which may pass between you and me on this subject shall be public, and because I have been informed that private applications for an explanation of that transaction have been heretofore made to you by some of my fellow-sufferers from your conduct, and that you did not think fit to favour them with a reply.

I am, sir,

Your most obedient

Humble servant,

THOMAS ADDIS EMMET.

New-York, April 4, 1807.

LETTER

LETTER III.

TO RUFUS KING, ESQ.

SIR,

From your silence on the subject of my letter of the 4th instant, I presume that I am not to be honoured with a reply. Perhaps this may be owing to my temerity in addressing him whom Mr. Coleman calls "the first man in the country." Of the height to which your friends exalt, or wish to exalt you, I confess I was not aware when I rashly ventured to question the propriety of some part of your past conduct. I thought that, in this country, you had many equals; and I protest I imagined that Mr. Jefferson, for instance, was your superior. You will, sir, however, I hope, excuse my ignorance in this respect, and attribute it to the circumstance of my being an alien, and of course not yet sufficiently acquainted with the local politics of this country.

Though you, sir, have not honoured me with your notice, I have been abundantly honoured by your friends; and yet extraordinary as it may appear, I mean to pay little attention to their assiduities, but to envelope myself in dignity like your own. As far as they have attempted to attack my character, I shall leave it to be defended by others, or rather to defend itself. Not that I affect to be insensible of the value of public opinion, but in truth, sir, in the present pressure of professional business, I have not time to do justice both to you and to myself; and I think it of infinitely more importance to the community, in the existing crisis, to make known what you are, than what I am. You are the candidate for public favour, and your conduct is the proper subject of public enquiry. Permit me, however, sir,

before I enter upon that interesting topic, to make a few general observations touching myself. Mr. Coleman has brought forward some extracts from the reports of the secret committee in Ireland: I think it more than probable that he was not himself in possession of these documents—from whom then did he receive them? There is no person in this country more likely to have them, than the gentleman who was at the time the resident minister at London.—When you handed them to him, perhaps your memory might have served you to state, that as soon as those reports appeared in the public prints, Dr. Mac Neven, Mr. O'Connor, and myself, at that time state prisoners, by an advertisement to which we subscribed our names, protested against the falsehood and inaccuracy of those reports; for which act we were remitted to close custody in our rooms for upwards of three months, and a proposal was made in the Irish house of commons, by Mr. M'Naghten, an Orangeman, to take us out and hang us without trial! You might also, perhaps, have recollected (for it has been published) that, while we were in this situation, other state calumnies accidentally reached the ears of one of our fellow-sufferers in another prison, who wrote a letter to the editor of the Courier in London, for the purpose of contradicting them, and enclosed a copy of his letter to Lord Castlereagh. Upon this Mr. Secretary Cooke was sent to inform him, that if he published the contradiction, he should be hanged; to that he replied he was ready to meet the event; upon which Mr. Cooke told him, that since he was indifferent about his own life, he must know that, if he persevered, the whole system of courts martial, massacre and horror, should be renewed throughout the country. By that menace he was effectually restrained.

Had you thought of mentioning those things, you might have jocularly added that though these statements might serve some present party purposes, it was rather more unfair to judge of us by the calumnies of the Irish government, than it would be to judge of Mr. Jefferson and his friends by the editorial

rial articles in the Evening Post. The weapons you are using have been tried in Ireland among my friends and my enemies, where every thing was minutely known, and they failed of effect. If I had ever done any thing mean or dishonourable, if I had abandoned or compromised my character, my country or my cause, I should not be esteemed and beloved in Ireland, as I am proud to know I am; I should not enjoy the affection and respect of my republican countrymen in America, as you, sir, and your friends confess I do. It would not be in the power of one who had departed from the line of his duty in theirs and his common country, by simply expressing to them his sentiments of you, to do you such an essential injury as I am accused of having committed.

Another charge made against me, is that I am an alien, interfering in the politics of this country. Be it so for a moment, and let me ask why is it that I am an alien in this my adopted country at this day? Because, in consequence of your interference, I was prevented from coming to it in 1798, and from being naturalized upwards of three years ago. Supposing then that I should refrain from intermedling with politics in every other case, where you are concerned I feel myself authorised to exercise the rights of a citizen as far as by law I may; for you know it is an established rule of equity and good sense, that no man shall be benefitted by his own wrong. But how do I come forward? Not as a citizen, but as a witness. Allow me to ask you, if I possessed a knowledge of facts which could prove Mr. Jefferson guilty of a robbery or a cheat, and unfit to be trusted with power, would you think me culpable if, notwithstanding my alienage, I made them known to the public, to prevent their being deceived and misled? And shall I not be permitted, because in consequence of your very misconduct I am not a citizen, to testify to facts which will prove you unfit to be entrusted in this country with any kind of delegated power? Whether Peter Porcupine or Mr. Carpenter ever went through the forms of naturalization,

naturalization, I know not; but perhaps they might both be safely considered as aliens; and yet I have never heard any of your friends censure their interference in the politics of America. I do not mention those gentlemen as my models, nor propose their example as my vindication, but I wish to shew the pliability of those principles which are to be erected into a barrier against me.

As a witness, then, sir, I come forward to testify, not to my countrymen, but to the electors of this city, to the whole of the United States, if you should ever aspire to govern them, and I now present you with my evidence.

In the summer of 1798, after the attempt of the people of Ireland for their emancipation had been completely defeated; after every armed body had been dispersed or had surrendered, except a few men that had taken refuge in the mountains of Wicklow: while military tribunals, house-burnings, shootings, torture, and every kind of devastation were desolating and overwhelming the defenceless inhabitants, some of the state prisoners then in confinement, entered into a negotiation with the Irish ministers for effecting a general amnesty; and as an inducement offered, among other things not necessary to the examination of your conduct, to emigrate to such country as might be agreed upon between them and the government. When I consented to this offer, for one, (and it was the case with the great majority) I solemnly declare that I was perfectly apprised that there was no legal grounds discovered upon which to proceed against me.—I further knew that the crown solicitor had, in answer to the enquiries of my friends, informed them that there was no intention of preferring a bill of indictment against me. So much for the personal considerations by which I might have been actuated; and now, sir, to return.

The offer was accepted, the bloody system was stopped for a time, and was not renewed until after your interference, and after

after the British ministry had resolved openly to break its faith with us.—On our part, we performed our stipulations with the most punctilious fidelity, but in such a manner as to preserve to us the warmest approbation of our friends, and to excite the greatest dissatisfaction in our enemies. Government soon perceived, that on the score of interest, it had calculated badly, and had gained nothing by the contract. It was afraid of letting us go at large to devolope and detect the misrepresentations and calumnies that were studiously set afloat, and had therefore, I am convinced, determined to violate its engagements by keeping us prisoners as long as possible. How was this to be done? In the commencement of our negotiation, Lord Castlereagh declared, as a reason for our acceding to government's possessing a negative on our choice, that it had no worse place in view for our emigration than the United States of America. We had made our election to go there, and called upon him to have our agreement carried into execution. In that difficulty, you, sir, afforded very effectual assistance to the faithlessness of the British cabinet. On the 16th of September, Mr. Marsden, then under secretary, came to inform us that Mr. King had remonstrated against our being permitted to emigrate to America. This astonished us all, and Dr. Mac Neven very plainly said that he considered this as a mere trick between Mr. King and the British government. This Mr. Marsden denied, and on being pressed to know what reason Mr. King could have for preventing us, who were avowed republicans, from emigrating to America, he significantly answered, "perhaps Mr. King does not desire to have republicans in America." Your interference was then, sir, made the pretext of detaining us for four years in custody, by which very extensive and useful plans of settlement within these states were broken up. The misfortunes which you brought upon the objects of your persecution were incalculable. Almost all of us wasted four of the best years of our lives in prison. As to me, I should have brought along with me my father and his family, including a brother, whose

whose name perhaps will you even not read without emotions of sympathy and respect. Others nearly connected with me would have come partners in my emigration. But all of them have been torn from me. I have been prevented from saving a brother, from receiving the dying blessings of a father, mother and sister, and from soothing their last agonies by my cares; and this, sir, by your unwarrantable and unfeeling interference.

Your friends, when they accuse me of want of moderation in my conduct towards you, are wonderfully mistaken. They do not reflect, or know, that I have never spoken of you without suppressing (as I do now) personal feelings that rise up within me, and swell my heart with indignation and resentment. But I mean to confine myself to an examination of your conduct, as far as it is of public importance.

The step you took was unauthorized by your own government. Our agreement with that of Ireland was entered into on the 29th of July—your prohibition was notified to us on the 16th of September; deduct seven days for the two communications between Dublin and London, and you had precisely forty-two days, in the calms of summer, for transmitting your intelligence to America and receiving an answer. As you had no order then, what was the motive of your unauthorised act? I cannot positively say, but I will tell you my conviction. The British ministry had resolved to detain us prisoners contrary to their plighted honour; and you, sir, I fear, lent your ministerial character to enable them to commit an act of perfidy, which they would not otherwise have dared to perpetrate.—Whether our conduct in Ireland was right or wrong, you have no justification for yours—The constitution and laws of this country gave you no power to require of the British government that it should violate its faith, and withdraw from us its consent to the place we had fixed upon for our voluntary emigration.—Neither the President nor you were warranted to prevent our touching

touching these shores; though the former might, under the alien act, have afterwards sent us away if he had reason to think we were plotting any thing against the United States. I have heard something about the law of nations; but you are too well acquainted with that law not to know that it has no bearing on this subject. Our emigration was voluntary, and the English government had, in point of justice, no more to do with it than to signify that there was no objection to the place of residence we had chosen.

Another circumstance which compels me to believe a collusive league between you, in your capacity of resident minister from America, and the cabinet of St. James's, is the very extravagant and unwarrantable nature of your remonstrance, which had the ministry been sincere towards us, they could not possibly have overlooked. If they had intended to observe their conpact, you, sir, would have been very quickly made to feel the futility of your ill-timed application. You would have been taught that it was a matter of mere private arrangement between government and us, with which you had no more to do than the minister of Denmark, Sweden, Portugal, or any other neutral power. What inference ought fairly to be made from the facts I have stated, every man must decide for himself. On me, they have forced a conviction, which, if you can shake it, I shall much more gladly forego than I state it here, than in the instance alluded to, you degraded the dignity and independence of the country you represented, you abandonded the principles of its government and its policy, and you became the tool of a foreign state, to give it a colourable pretext for the commission of a crime. If so, is it fit that you should hereafter be entrusted with any kind of delegated authority? What motives you may have had for that conduct, if in truth it was yours, I cannot undertake to say. Mr. Marsden seemed to doubt whether you wished for republicans in America—and I shrewdly suspect he spoke what the British ministry thought of your politics.

Perhaps it may be said that you were yourself deceived by those very calumnies of which I have complained. I sincerely wish I could believe that such were the fact—but observe this argument. We contradicted the mistatements of the committees of the lords and commons of Ireland, by an advertisement written in prison, signed by our names, and published on the 27th of August—it must have reached London, on the 1st or 2d of Sept. your remonstrance must have been made on or before the 12th, for it was communicated to us on the 16th. The effect produced by our advertisement was electrical, and the debate which it caused on the very evening of its appearance, in the Irish house of commons, was remarkable. As you doubtless read the newspapers of the day, these facts could not have been unknown to you. Why then should you be deceived by representations which we had recently contradicted under circumstances so extraordinary? Mr. King, did you enter so deeply into the revolution of your country as to implicate your life in the issue of its fortunes? From the strong attachment of your political friends, I presume you were a distinguished leader in those eventful times; if not, you had certainly read their history. Did you remember the calumnies which had been thrown out by British agents against the most upright and venerable patriots of America? Did you call to mind the treatment which had been given in South Carolina to Gov. Gadsden, to Gen. Rutherford, Col. Isaacs, and a number of others who had surrendered to that very Lord Cornwallis, with whom, through his ministers, we negotiated; and that those distinguished characters were, in violation of their capitulation and the rights of parole, sent to St. Augustine, as we were afterwards to Fort George? How then is it possible that you could have been a dupe to the misrepresentations of the British government?

These remarks I address, with all becoming respect, to "the first man in the country"—Yet in fact, sir, I do not clearly see in what consists your superiority over myself. It is true you have

have been a resident minister at the court of St. James's; and if what I have read in the public prints be true, and if you be apprised of my near relationship and family connexion with the late Sir John Temple, you must acknowledge that your interference as resident minister at the court of St. James's, against my being permitted to emigrate to America, is a very curious instance of the caprice of fortune. But let that pass. To what extent I ought to yield to you for talents and information, is not for me to decide. In no other respect, however, do I feel your excessive superiority. My private character and conduct are, I hope, as fair as yours—and even in those matters which I consider as trivial, but upon which aristocratic pride is accustomed to stamp a value, I should not be inclined to shrink from competition. My birth certainly will not humble me by the comparison; my paternal fortune was probably much greater than yours; the consideration in which the name I bear was held in my native country, was as great as yours is ever likely to be, before I had an opportunity of contributing to its celebrity. As to the amount of what private fortune I have been able to save from the wreck of calamity, it is unknown to you or to your friends; but two things I will tell you—I never was indebted, either in the country from which I came, nor in any other in which I have lived, to any man, further than the necesary credit for the current expences of a family; and am not so circumstanced that I should tremble "*for my subsistence*" at the threatened displeasure of your friends. So much for the past and the present—now for the future. Circumstances which cannot be controuled, have decided that my name must be embodied into history. From the manner in which even my political adversaries, and some of my cotemporary historians, unequivocally hostile to my principles, already speak of me, I have the consolation of reflecting, that when the falsehoods of the day are withered and rotten, I shall be respected and esteemed. You, sir, will probably be forgotten, when I shall be remembered with honour, or if, peradventure

venture, your name should descend to posterity, perhaps you will be known only as the recorded instrument of part of *my* persecutions, sufferings, and misfortunes.

I am, sir, &c.

THOMAS ADDIS EMMET.

New-York, April 9, 1807.

STATISTICAL

STATISTICAL ESSAY,

ON THE

POPULATION AND RESOURCES OF IRELAND,

BY WILLIAM J. MAC NEVEN.

I PUBLISHED the following Statistical Essay in the Paris Argus of December the 17th, 1803, in order to prove how much the population and resources of Ireland exceeded the usual estimate of persons otherwise well informed. It is republished here with some addition, because the facts it contains are not perhaps better known in America than they were in the capital of France, and in order to shew the folly, no less than the injustice of the British government, which has been hazarding every day for the last fifteen years, through the most iniquitous treatment, the loss of so essential a member of its empire.

PERSONS having expressed doubts as to the amount of the population and other resources ascribed to Ireland, in the essay copied from the Moniteur into the Argus of November the 16th, the following details are offered in order to shew the grounds of some of the opinions set forth in that paper.

The

The tax imposed until lately in Ireland on every hearth, commonly known by the name of the hearth-money tax, gives very correctly the number of inhabited houses, of which returns were made to the commissioners of the revenue. One of these, Mr. Jervis Bushe, found, by a calculation taken from the revenue books, that the houses paying the duty amounted in 1788 to 650,000, without including barracks, hospitals, school-houses, or public buildings. But as it was a common practice with collectors to return houses as waste which paid the duty, for the purpose of sinking the money in their own pockets, Mr. Bushe, aided by his official situation, instituted different other researches, and these left him of opinion that 60,000 houses more should be added to the official returns, making in all 710,000 inhabited houses. From the mass of those, in which the inhabitants had been counted, there were taken indiscriminately 14,108, and the population was 87,895; which gives somewhat more than 6 1-4 to each house. Consequently the population of the whole must by the same ratio have been in 1788, 4,437,506. The authors of the Encyclopædia Britannica, article Ireland, compute the number of inhabitants to be 4,500,000. The interesting paper of Mr. Bushe on this subject, is inserted in the 3d volume of the transactions of the Irish Academy. The same gentleman found by the revenue books that the increase of houses from 1777 to 1788, was 173,058. The increase of houses from 1788 to 1799, was greater still; but this result was not in either case owing altogether to the building of new ones: it is to be in part ascribed to a greater accuracy obtained in the new returns. In order, however, to be within the most scrupulous bounds, we will take the increase of houses from 1788 down to the present time to be no more than 173,058, what it was found by enumeration to have been in the eleven years preceding 1788. The amount of houses will be then 883,000, and this, multiplied by 6 1-4, gives 5,518,750 for the actual population of the whole island.

Another

Another computation, though formed on different principles, will be found to give a similar result. The superficial contents of Ireland are to those of England and Wales as 27,457 is to 49,450; but the former country, on account of containing less waste land in proportion to its area,* has a somewhat denser population. Now, as that of England and Wales, according to the last enumeration made two years ago, is 9,444,950, Ireland should have half that amount, and as much more as Ireland exceeds the one half of England and Wales in extent. This is 2,732 square miles, which, multiplied by 200, the population of every Irish square mile gives 546,400 souls, and these, added to 4,722,475, the half of the population of England, make that of Ireland equal to 5,268,875. The county of Wexford alone furnished 40,000 fighting men in the insurrection of 1798, and if the proportion of that county to the rest of the island be considered, the amount of the population resulting from this estimate likewise cannot be less than 5,500,000.

There is so near a coincidence between all these results, that we cannot reasonably deny their general correctness. As printed authorities will, however, be required in a case of this kind by strangers, much satisfaction will be received on the subject from the calculations of *Chalmers*, and from an excellent essay published by *a member of the late Irish Parliament*.

As to the advantages which England derives from Ireland in point of revenue, they were rated much too low in the essay given to the Moniteur; for their real amount would, it was feared, seem almost incredible to those who had not attentively considered that generally neglected country. Yet from *official documents* it appears that the amount of the receipts of the treasury in Ireland for the year ending the 5th of January, 1801, was £.9,435,896 11s. 8d.†

In

* Vide Arthur Young's Tour in Ireland.

† Vide *Monthly Magazine*, for April, 1802.

In the Committee of ways and means, Mr. Addington stated the *joint* expences of England and Ireland for the year 1802, at £31,259,209, the 2-17 contributed by Ireland equal £3,677,554; to this must be added 2-17 of £1,174,401, for civil list and other charges on the consolidated fund, not relating to the public debt, equal for the share of Ireland to £138,164, and making altogether for her £3,815,718 sterling.

The part contributed by Ireland to the joint charges of the same year, as set forth by Mr. Corry, the Irish chancellor of the Exchequer, was £3,769,000 sterling, and for the Irish army on foreign service £360,000 more, amounting together to £4,129,000 sterling. The separate expenses of Ireland, including the interest of her debt contracted in support of England, were at the same time stated by Mr. Corry at £3,298,000 more, and the entire expenses of Ireland for that year at £7,427,000 sterling.

All this was four years ago, but I find in the elaborate work of Mr. Jepson Oddy, the ordinary revenue and extraordinary resources constituting the public income of Ireland stated as follows, for the year ending the 5th of January, 1805:

Ordinary revenues,	£4,122,711 0 6½	
Extraordinary revenues,	226,544 14 1¼	
Appropriate duties for local objects,	25,012 10 5	
Total, independent of loans,		£4,374,268 5 0¾
Loans paid into the exchequer in the year ending the 5th of January, 1805,	£5,324,709 12 11¼	
Grand total for that year,		£9,698,977 17 11⅞

This large sum amounts in dollars and cents, to 43,106,564 36; and is wrung from a wretched British province, without name

or

or character abroad, without peace, liberty or happiness at home, by a selfish oppressor that squanders her resources, and consummates her degradation.

The ordinary revenue alone of Ireland amounted, it appears, in the year ending the 5th of January, 1805, to 18,328,160 dollars 8 cents; which is considerably higher than the whole income of the general government of America in the same period.

The total receipts of the treasury of the United States were then 17,597,698 dollars 46 cents; but of this sum, no more was expended for the support of the general government, than 13,598,309 dollars, 47 cents; the expense of all the state governments together is fully estimated at about 2,000,000 more. Making in the entire, 15,598,309 dollars 47 cents.

That is, a country enjoying greater general happiness and a more progressive prosperity than any other in the world, whose commercial shipping averages 900,000 tons, whose flag is seen on every sea, whose industry is as unbounded as the globe, whose inhabitants possess liberty, peace and self-government, is not at this moment much more populous than Ireland, and pays little more for those manifold blessings than one third of what it costs the Irish people to live subject to ignominy, disquietude, commercial restraints, and political slavery. Such are the advantages on one side of having shaken off the British yoke, and such the wretchedness on the other of being under its control.

CIRCULAR.

THE following Circular Letter was drawn up for the purpose of making known in Ireland, and among the emigrant Irish in America, the writer's intention of treating of the affairs of that country. To shew that he has not relinquished his design in consequence of the present publication, he reprints his prospectus with this work :—

SIR,

Being now engaged, as far as my leisure will permit, in preparing an account of Irish affairs for the last thirty years, I wish to acquaint with my design those who feel any interest in such a work, that they may communicate to me, if they please, the facts and documents they possess, which their avocations or safety may not allow themselves to make public.

In speaking of individuals yet alive, or of those departed lately, whilst I attempt to record their actions and motives in such colours of applause or censure as may stigmatize vice and emblazon virtue, still, it is by the merit of impartiality to all concerned, that I am most ambitious of distinguishing my performance. I write in a country where I have nothing to fear, and nothing to hope, from any power or party in Europe : The interest of truth is that alone for which my thoughts can now revert to the past ; and as far as I already know, or shall be able to ascertain it, friends and foes will meet with equal candour.

This

This spirit of sincerity prompts to the acknowledgment, that I should not engage in my present undertaking, unless I thought, when honestly executed, it would redound to the honour of a country which will be ever dear to me; of friends whom I shall ever cherish; of a cause I shall never abandon; and all of which, if virtue could ensure success, had found another fate than what they now experience in the loss of liberty, and the extinction of independence.

Though the history of the period to which I now confine myself, be most important to Irish readers, yet it is not to them alone that it offers subjects of sympathy, instructive lessons, and themes of meditation. The first spectacle it presents, is a generous and gallant people aiming at the best acquisition for which a nation can contend; but from jealousy and disunion, losing a great opportunity, and the noblest prize. The corrupting, disuniting, debilitating interference of a foreign enemy, blindly deemed a friend, is at length universally felt; the consequences are generally deplored; an earnest attempt is made to redress the evil—and again the foreign foe labours with successful inveteracy to reduce the patriot by the bigot, and after immolating what was good, and exposing what was vile, appropriates, with stern indifference the profits of their animosities.

Public spirit, unrivalled eloquence, military ardour, integrity, and patriotism, will balance the stain of venality, the baseness of treason, the prostitution of talents, the abject surrender of national rights; and still uphold the Irish character as great and good, amidst the vitiating taints that make inroads on it, from a foreign shore.

We shall see fortitude worthy of the most heroic ages; fidelity that would honour the most virtuous; benevolence of intention, with philosophy of design, that would ensure the greatest blessings;—and by the side of these, an audacity in the commission

mission of crime, a maturity in corruption, a consummateness in villainy, that will exhibit the Irish people frequently wise or wicked, but never little—that will shew them to be whatever they are with energy; and prove the noble materials they possess for forming an independent state, if they should ever emerge from the slavery that produces their worst vices, and be left to foster the splendid qualities that belong to their own nature.

Of all that can affect, elevate or improve the heart and inform the judgment, examples may be found in the history of these thirty years. An Irishman of any party may well be desirous that transactions which, after all, give a high idea of his country, should not be lost to its fame. Though the conclusion commemorate no triumph to dwell on with pride or exultation, it possesses the interest of tragedy, and instructs by its catastrophe.

WILLIAM JAMES MAC NEVEN.

New-York, 1806.

FINIS.

Third Edition, with Additions and Corrections.

CONSTITUTIONAL

OBJECTIONS

TO THE

GOVERNMENT OF IRELAND

BY A

SEPARATE LEGISLATURE,

IN

A LETTER

TO

JOHN HAMILTON, ESQ.

OCCASIONED BY HIS REMARKS ON *A MEMOIRE* ON THE PROJECTED UNION.

By THEOBALD M'KENNA, Esq.

DUBLIN:

PRINTED BY E. FITZPATRICK 2, UPPER ORMOND-QUAY.

1799.



PREFACE.

PERHAPS it is not more allowable to plead aſſitude in any other circumſtances, than when the mind has been for ſome time engaged with a queſtion of controverſial politics. I muſt acknowledge that I ſend theſe papers to the preſs, without having completed my original deſign. Although this diviſion of the argument has become more tedious than I could poſſibly have conjectured.

I propoſe, at a convenient time, to return to the ſubject, with a view to inſiſt more fully on the inefficacy of the ſeveral projects for internal regulation, which have been propounded in this kingdom; to enforce what appears to me, by no means unimportant in the preſent ſtate of the public mind, that to be a member of the Britiſh empire is indiſpenſable to the good of Ireland: I think it will follow, as of courſe, that a ſtate of general incorporation is the form of connection, moſt eligible and advantageous. I ſhall endeavour to examine and aſſign the real cauſes of our relative proſperity for ſome years back; relative to the condition of Ireland, before ſhe recovered in any degree from the effects of the civil wars; but in no wiſe relative to the degree of proſperity ſhe might have attained, under a ſyſtem of univerſal regulation more congenial to the people. The North of Ireland I muſt put out of the queſtion, as its peculiar circumſtances exempt it from the pernicious diſtribution of powers, and application of

authority. Trade has been purſued with advantage in the kingdom of Bengal, and at Cairo and Alexandria: Does it therefore follow, that the general ſtate of ſociety in theſe countries is perfect? Fortunes are accumulated at Cadiz and Oporto: Is it impracticable to correct the diſcipline of Government in Spain and Portugal?

Whilſt the profits of trade in Cork and Dublin are at thouſands per annum, the rate of labour within forty miles of either city, is at ſix-pence the day; or, which is a more exact criterion, the people within half that diſtance are abject and comfortleſs.

If any man were to impute the ſtate of manners and induſtry in England, not to the ſuppreſſion of villanage, and early abolition of feudal juriſdiction; but to two pence bounty upon woollens, and three farthings upon cotton; he ſhould reaſon juſt as thoſe do, who ſuppoſe this nation to have thriven merely by parliamentary encouragement, and who make no account of the repeal of the popery laws, which turned the induſtry of millions to the cultivation of the country. The Engliſh reign of Henry VII. appears to me very much to reſemble the government of George III. in Ireland.

Moſt Sovereigns give bounties, but only the Britiſh ſtate affords a gentle and protecting government to the lower people.

I muſt admit, that unleſs the ſupreme adminiſtration be decided in its views of favour, and judicious conciliation to this country, the projected change of conſtitution is ſcarcely prudent. Under the preſent forms, there are more reſources for an evil government; and a greater number of intereſts may be collected to keep the people in ſubjection.

I conſidered it ſuperfluous to add any thing to the very ample diſcuſſion, which the competence of parliament has already received. Still this moſt futile of all objections is dignified with the notice, even in the very laſt debate, of men of talents. From Mr. Foſter's high character, and juſt pretenſions to political eſtimation, one would have expected him to examine every part of the queſtion, rather as a ſtateſman, who ſeeks to warrant his concluſions by truth and policy, than as a partizan, endeavouring to give his cauſe the moſt favourable exterior. That gentleman has condeſcended to mention the powers of Parliament.

The Parliament of Ireland has altered the laws, manners, religion and property of this iſland. Was it competent to change the eſſentials of civil ſociety, and has it no diſcretion over the forms? Or will it be propoſed to bring all theſe former acts into hotchpot, and look for a new diſtribution?

It is eſſential that there be in every ſtate, a ſovereign power, becauſe no limited authority can embrace all the cares upon which the welfare of the people requires a deciſion. Is the Iriſh Parliament that ſovereign power? If it be not, where does it reſide? If it is that ſovereign power, it muſt be competent to determine, whether any propoſition ſubmitted to it, be for the good of its ſubjects; and in caſe of approbation, to carry the deſign into effect. There would otherwiſe be a deficiency of legiſlative proviſion, which is juſt as prepoſterous and abſurd, and inadmiſſible, as in ordinary caſes, would be a failure of diſtributive juſtice.

Suppoſe the French conſtitution to be the bane of the people, and that the ſole hope of ſalvation is to ſubmit to a Monarchy, is the ſovereign power in poſſeſſion inadequate to make that ſalutary

lutary change? Suppoſe the delegated oligarchy of Berne thought fit to abdicate, are its hands tied up? By theſe doctrines, an abuſe with a popular aſpect is entailed for ever; unleſs perhaps in caſe of a total revolution; for no one can ſuppoſe that the United Iriſhmen would conſider themſelves bound by our actual conſtitution.

The only queſtion that can poſſibly ariſe is this, which is the meaſure of Union good or evil for the country? If the former part of the alternative be the truth, that there exiſts no power competent to effect it, is a propoſition contrary to common ſenſe, and muſt therefore be rejected.

The power, which a man has over his own exiſtence, may ſerve to illuſtrate the capacity of a ſovereign juriſdiction to make engagements for its extinction. The law of morality does not allow ſuicide; but if it be neceſſary to hazard one's life, the act is juſtified by the end. A man may not ſhoot himſelf capriciouſly; but he may go upon a mine, with a certainty of being blown up, and if he ſaves an army by expoſing himſelf, his conduct is heroiſm.

It has been obſerved with great triumph, that without a reſident parliament, we ſhould have loſt the advantage of its activity, in counteracting the late conſpiracy. I apprehend the merit of detecting and baffling the plots carried on by the French party in Ireland, belongs appropriately to the executive department. Documents and evidence were laid before Parliament, and ſuch parts as were judged proper were given to the public. The Houſe of Commons overturned the rebellion, preciſely as a grand jury, when it finds a bill of indictment, breaks a combination of murderers. The Report would have been alike

ſolemn;

ſolemn, alike authentic, and alike valuable, if it had proceeded from a committee of the Privy Council.

Whether the arrangement of 1782 was intended to be final, is a queſtion, on which I ſhould never have beſtowed a thought, had it not happened to have conſtituted the main ſupport of Mr. Foſter's celebrated argument. There can be little doubt, that the Britiſh Parliament muſt have very ſincerely wiſhed to be at eaſe on the head of Iriſh politics. Equally muſt we admit, that the Parliament of Ireland would have ſeen with great good will, its influence accepted by the people. The Parliament promiſed luſtily; but no circumſtance can go more directly to prove, that the connexion of opinion between the Parliament and people of Ireland is weak, than this very fact, that the addreſſes Mr. Foſter cites, were paſſed very unanimouſly by Parliament, and yet the ink was ſcarcely dry upon them when new murmurs aroſe, and rival delegations were convened, and hoſtile agreements againſt England entered into, and Parliament was obliged to call upon the force of the ſtate for its protection. Lord Northington trod in ſteps of the Duke of Portland; his reign was far from a calm. The Duke of Rutland, to the affair of the Propoſitions, had the ſupport of the patriots of 1782, and of the preſent day; ſtill his adminiſtration was, during that interval, among the moſt turbulent we have ever experienced. Does Mr. Foſter ſuppoſe that diſcontents are immaterial, unleſs they exiſt within the circle of Parliament? Does he forget the very nature of thoſe diſcuſſions over which he preſides? Every debate in Parliament is an appeal from the deciſion of the Houſe to the feelings or the paſſions of the people.

I ſhall add one more to theſe deſultory obſervations. I have ſeen a queſtion in print, and I have heard

heard it in private converſation. What! ſome perſons exclaim, do you ſuppoſe there is that magic in a ſcroll of parchment, that it can draw the bonds of connexion ſtrait. Gentlemen forget that undervaluing the ſcroll of Union, they cry up the ſcroll of annexation. One piece of parchment is juſt as valuable as the other. They deſcribe ſyſtems of very different operation, and in that conſiſts the diverſity. I preſume, that the real ſubſtance of either plan of government is the manner in which it is likely to affect the public feeling. The annexation ſyſtem implies the government of a party. If the management of the country after an Union be on principles of general good and protection, this form will create more firm attachment, and prove a more ſure bond of connexion.

CONSTITUTIONAL

OBJECTIONS,

&c. &c.

LETTER I.

THE ſenſible obſervations which you did me the honour to make on my MEMOIRS, and the candid and liberal turn of your expreſſions and ſentiments, impoſed on me a duty which I have long deſired to diſcharge. I owed an explanation of opinions, which, however formed upon full reflection, were rather haſtily delivered; I owed a reply to the ſtile of poliſhed animadverſion in which you oppoſed me. Motives of convenience, and other conſiderations of merely private import, interfered with my intention; but the delay has not, to my feelings, been unproductive of gratification and advantage. We have reached a moment when an amicable controverſy may with the greateſt freedom and facility be maintained. The deciſion of Parliament has reduced the matter of our difference to a ſpeculative queſtion on the welfare of the country. I hold it to be a true, but certainly not a ſelf-evident propoſition, that an Union with Great Britain is that remedial change, which is peculiarly adapted to the diſorders of the Iriſh ſtate, and which theſe diſorders do ſeem to indicate. With feelings ſimilar to thoſe you expreſs, I too, ſome time back, ſhould have revolted at the propoſal to ſup-

preſs the diſtinct legiſlature of Ireland. There is ſomewhat faſcinating in the matter of public pride, however remote, indeed however fanciful the ſhare one may be ſuppoſed to bear in it, which fully accounts for the repugnance of many eſtimable perſons to entertain the project. It is an alteration of very great magnitude, which merits to be coolly explained, and deliberately inveſtigated. The increaſed activity of the enemy requires to be counteracted by new combinations and new expedients. If his power covers an extent of territory which we cannot hope, and do not deſire to emulate, it is for us to conſolidate our ſtrength, as the moſt effectual mode of reſiſtance. But the circumſtances, which impreſs the meaſure upon my mind with moſt forcible recommendation, are, firſt, the ſeries of events which in the ſpace of five years have paſſed before us; and next, the reflections that ariſe upon a view of the condition and proſpects of the country. A credulous people, the eaſy dupe of artful politicians, readily enliſted in conteſts for power, that do not regard them: the waving of an hand ſufficed to ſtir up the principles of difference; and that difference ſhewed itſelf malignant to a degree that one never could have calculated. Shall it be deemed unwiſe to circumſcribe the ſphere of acrimonious and unprofitable diſputes, and to protect the land from their baneful conſequence? This queſtion is to be examined diſpaſſionately; and I muſt rejoice in an opportunity of juſtifying and enforcing my opinions to you, and to thoſe friends who may be induced to conſider them, uninterrupted by any tendency to the warmth, which the moſt calm are diſpoſed to feel, when an irrevocable determination is at hand, very adverſe to the prejudices they have been uſed to cheriſh.

You

You have not altered my notions of the public good, but you have ſhewn me that in the mind of a man, who has conſidered the ſubject under different impreſſions, my ideas are expoſed to objections of conſiderable ſpecioufneſs. Either I have explored the ſtate of Ireland with too anxious reſearch, and ſuffered my mind to dwell too minutely on her diſtractions; or your examination has not been ſufficiently cloſe, or your modes of redreſs ſufficiently radical. My aim was to catch the general principles by which people are uſually moved, and upon theſe only did I venture to calculate, when I conſidered by what impulſe the conduct of great bodies was like to be directed. You appear to me to expect, that the ingenuous feelings which you bring into private life, and which you meet there, may be converted into rules of general influence and practice*. Let, you ſay, the Government do this, and the Parliament that; and let the Catholics purſue this conduct, and the Proteſtants this other; and then, all

* It has been repeatedly alledged that the advantages expected from an Union are theoretical. Now I appeal to any man of plain underſtanding, which ſuppoſition is more theoretical—that a conſtitution which has uniformly generated faction and diſcontent, and nothing elſe, will henceforward operate more benignly; or that, corrected by an Union, its vices will be ſoftened, and ſuch a protective ſyſtem be eſtabliſhed, as that, under which Great-Britain flouriſhes?

To this you will oppoſe the relative proſperity of the country for ſome years back. I propoſe elſewhere, to prove that the improvements aroſe from the repeal of the Popery Laws, which was forced upon Parliament, and from other circumſtances, which might as well have ariſen under a general, as a local legiſlature; but which under the former would probably have ſooner occurred and extended more widely. Every ſyllable advanced againſt the meaſure of an Union is the contraſt of theory to practice, of what might be againſt what is.

all things will proceed admirably. "How rich ſhould I be," ſaid poor Henry in the novel, "if the States-General would pay me." Can it eſcape your underſtanding, that the entire difficulty conſiſts in drawing theſe ſeveral bodies to a ſenſe of what is mutually right, and of the conduct they ought to purſue towards one another? * A proneneſs to faction is the diſtemper of the Iriſh nation. What ſcheme of relief do you offer to remove theſe fatiguing ſolicitudes that agitate the public mind? To direct the popular attention to different objects? Not at all. Still preſerving cautiouſly the matter and motives of diſunion, you invoke the virtues of patience and forbearance to aſſuage its effects. To be ſure theſe qualities are inеſtimable, if they were to be attained; but they are the very contraſt, the direct antipodes of the ſpirit of party under which we labour; and to the exiſtence of the one, it is eſſential, that it excludes the others; ſo that the remedy which you and ſeveral others inſiſt on, preſuppoſes the extinction of the vice it is to be applied to. We ſhould not ſtand in need of the aid of medicine, if men were uniformly temperate; nor of the guidance of the ſtateſman, if they were wiſe; nor of the diſcipline of criminal juſtice, if they were virtuous. To expect that an high ſtate of perfection ſhall prevail generally in a large ſociety, or ſhall operate with any conſtancy of influence, is

* It is obſervable, that in Mr. Foſter's ſpeech, this head is utterly omitted. One might ſuppoſe that gentleman to have gone to reſt when the Commercial Propoſitions were diſpoſed of in 1785, and to have awakened from his dream on the 11th of April, 1799—Surely no perſon could think of changing the conditions of government, if in the actual ſtate of it the management of public affairs were not attended with great difficulties and perplexity; and ſurely any man might deliver an unanſwerable ſpeech, if you give him leave to put out of the argument, whatever might furniſh a reply to it.

is the rhapſody of a poetic imagination. To take as the baſis of a ſcheme of policy, a diſpoſition to propriety of conduct, in which multitudes muſt concur, is reſting the welfare of mankind on the chance of a miracle. General rules ſhould be—precautions againſt indiſcretion, not proviſions which require the aid of prudence to give them effect. Every day our parties approach nearer to an equality of conſideration and influence; and if an aſſembly be kept up, with ſcarcely any other function, beſides marſhalling the pretenſions of theſe parties, and giving audience to their controverſies, no perſon of ordinary foreceaſt will enſure us ſix months of harmony under any circumſtances whatever.* But of all other projects

* I have ſeen not a little falſe wit and reaſoning diſplayed againſt a very ſenſible obſervation—that a deſcription of our citizens, whoſe pretenſions to conſequence in the ſtate are increaſed by feeling themſelves a majority of the people of Ireland, would be more eaſily induced to acquieſce in eſtabliſhments derived under an imperial government, of which they would be a minority. I will beg to enforce the remark by this example:

In the firſt years of the French revolution, all the intereſts of the country were warmly agitated. There were ſeveral Proteſtants in the Aſſembly, yet no one ever heard of parties of Catholic and Proteſtant. If local legſlatures had been erected in the ſeveral provinces, ſuppoſe in Languedoc, where the Proteſtants are numerous and powerful, it would not be poſſible to prevent ſuch parties from being formed and taking root, and becoming the principal occupation of the Aſſembly. But a National Aſſembly was remote from theſe objects of contention; and amidſt the general and important concerns that occupied its cares, if any member propoſed to introduce the topic, he would not be attended to.

Open governments, thoſe I mean in which political affairs are diſcuſſed without reſerve, are of themſelves prone to faction—where there is a difference of religion, it tends in proportion, as the parties are nearly balanced, to increaſe this propenſity. That is a very urgent reaſon to render Ireland as little as poſſible the ſcene of political activity.

The

projects for appeaſing civil ſtriſe, this ſcheme you offer of mutual kindneſs and conciliation, founded on a ſenſe of obligations conferred, and of favours to be expected, is the moſt unpromiſing. It requires a co-operation ſo univerſal, as cannot poſſibly be procured; it renders the diſcerning and the wiſe on either ſide, reſponſible for the worthleſs and the deſperate; and whilſt thoſe are labouring to eſtabliſh a good underſtanding, theſe are free (and they will never want inſtigation) to ſquander the entire ſtock of merits, in a ſingle ſally of intemperance; in the vaſt collections of men who are the ſubjects of this arrangement, there can be no ſubordination. I have dwelt ſomewhat longer on this head, as ſo many oppo-

nents

The parties of Church-eſtabliſhed and Diſſident diſtracted Poland, until at length, the neighbouring powers profited of the occaſion to interpoſe; and, after a dreadful havoc of human happineſs, they completely overturned that Republic. The parties of Church-Eſtabliſhed and Arminian in Holland, produced many bitter contentions and tumults, and at length proved fatal to that government. Religious difference exiſts without animoſity in ſome governments, but theſe are cloſe conſtitutions.

Scotland was before the Union in a ſtate of the higheſt irritation, political added to religious; the difference between Epiſcopacy and the Conventiclers, like Proteſtant and Catholic with us, was artfully managed and fomented. A very ſerious tumult took place about the time of the Union, on account of opening a church of England chapel in Edinburgh. When the political motive was withdrawn, religious rancour ſubſided totally. Every ſect of chriſtians, worſhips at preſent in the principal towns of Scotland without incommoding each other. There is at this moment in the ſervice a very fine regiment, compoſed, officers and privates, of Scotch Catholics. Until very lately a ſect was preſerved in Scotland, with all the oſtentation of a regular hierarchy, who only diſſented from the Church of England, in denying his Majeſty's title to the Crown. By neglect they mouldered away, until the death of the late Pretender furniſhed a convenient occaſion for their ſubmiſſion: and ſo little was their former obſtinacy viſited upon them, that the bounty, alloted by Queen Anne to the Scotch Epiſcopalians, has been revived in their favour, and they now enjoy it.

nents of the Union have diſcourſed in the ſame ſtrain; although it may appear ſuperfluous to enter into the merits of the plan, whilſt the party that preponderates in the ſtate, neither by its political acts, nor the tenor of its publications, diſcloſes any inclination to conciliate.

Upon one fact all are agreed, that there is ſomewhat materially aſtray either in the temper, or in the politics of our country. Some conclude haſtily and ſummarily againſt the people, hoping that the advantage of ſituation may be ſufficient to exempt them from the impeachment againſt their ſpecies. Hiſtorical experience teaches another leſſon, that vice, widely diffuſed, is the unerring ſymptom of a ſociety defectively organized, or regulated injudiciouſly. Are the Iriſh gentry overbearing and inattentive to their inferiors? Are the commonality reſtleſs and untractable? Are their tumults ferocious? Is their ſtate of peace, a dull, indolent, inſipid langor? Every charge that can be brought againſt the people, recoils upon the inſtitutions that formed their character. Three modern inſurrections of the common people—that of Poland in 1768, of France from 1789 to 1792, and this of Ireland in 1798, will be traced in hiſtory by a very uniform courſe of atrocities. In theſe countries that claſs of men were greatly depreſſed by their ſuperiors; in Flanders and in America they were permitted to participate liberally in the natural and political advantages of the country; and the riſings which took place there, nearly within the ſame period, did not differ from any other regular hoſtility. I accuſe the habits and condition of my countrymen, as well of thoſe who are ſpoiled by the exerciſe of power, as of thoſe on whom it bears very heavily. Their natural diſpoſitions differ not from

thoſe

thoſe of other men with whom fate has dealt more kindly.* Whilſt the adjacent nations were reſolving into civilized habits, what has been the government of Ireland, but a perpetual ſcuffle between the ſtate and the people? And in that conteſt it might have continued to waſte its ſtrength for ever, if the Britiſh government had not interfered with views very different from thoſe of our domeſtic rulers. The ſeceſſion of America, firſt rendered it eſſential to concentrate the remaining powers of the empire. This inducement awakened, in the Britiſh government, towards the cloſe of the laſt war, a diſpoſition to attach the people of Ireland to the ſtate, and led to the firſt relaxation of the laws againſt the Catholics, which, like every ſubſequent meaſure of the kind, was extorted by the Crown from a reluctant ariſtocracy. The government was too intelligent not to perceive, that however acceptable to that body, it would not promote the cauſe of general vigour and reſource to rule this land by force, and in oppoſition to the genius of the people.† Miniſters

* "Nature," ſays an elegant and admired author, "never made an unkind creature. Ill uſage and bad habits have deformed a fair and lovely creation."—STERNE.

† By laws, enacted in the reign of Queen Anne, the Catholics of Ireland, which is another name for the people, were as to franchiſes, political influence and power, reduced to the ſituation of women and children; and as to property, they could acquire no beneficial intereſt in land, for even on the leaſeholds, which they were permitted to enjoy, the reſervation of a full rent was ſtipulated. This conſtitutes a degree of diſcountenance equal to that which aliens incur, where alienage is leaſt favored.

The natural conſequence of this arrangement, was to form the nation into two caſts; a minority, the favourites of the ſtate, who poſſeſſed all the authority, and influence, and emolument; a majority, the mere objects of power, unprivileged and outcaſt. I am warranted in calling this a government againſt the genius of the people.

Abou

ters ſought to render Ireland an effectual help-mate to Great-Britain, and they only could ſucceed

About twenty years ago, that part of the ſyſtem, which related to property was abandoned, probably on account of the inducements ſtated in the text, but certainly the conſequence was an immenſe acceſſion to the capital and induſtry of the country, which is moſt unfairly ſet down to the account of the vigilance of Parliament. Catholics, who acquired property abroad, ſettled in Ireland, and others laid out their money at home, who would have emigrated.

Still all the avenues to honor, emolument, and political influence were interdicted, and theſe conceſſions on the ſide of property, (although they otherwiſe benefited the nation,) as they turned men's thoughts from an aſylum in foreign countries, led them to ſpeculate more minutely on the inconvenience of their ſituation at home. I take it to have been one of the wildeſt projects that ever occurred to any perſon, to ſuppoſe that this country might be made to flouriſh with ſuch an obvious provocation to diſcontent. But ſome ſtateſmen imagine, that things go on very ſmoothly, if they are ſtrong enough to ſuppreſs or prevent rebellion. It never occurs to them that a nation, like an individual, may languiſh under bad management, and that a ſtate muſt be robuſt, to ſtruggle with the buffettings of theſe times we are placed in.

A further conceſſion was made about ſix years ſince, in conſequence of ſtrong repreſentations offered on the part of the Catholics to his Majeſty. But this favour was ſo warmly diſputed, that it revived animoſities through the country, or ſharpened them where they appeared to have been dormant. And the conceſſion was in ſome (and theſe very principal) parts, more nominal than real. For the weight of Parliamentary intereſt is ſo ſtrong againſt the Catholics, that after all, they participate as little as ever in ſituations of influence or advantage.

I apprehend that it is the intereſt of Ireland to bring the parties nearer to a ſtate of equality than they are at preſent, which can only be effected by a change in the conſtitution of Parliament. Augment the importance of the counties and diminiſh that of the cloſe boroughs. The Church eſtabliſhment is ſecured by England; it has, moreover, the balance of property on its ſide. The object is to put man and man upon a level in the affairs of civil life. This appears preferable to the policy of raiſing up one party againſt another.

Another circumſtance, which operates more immediately againſt the repoſe of this land, and to which I ſhall have occaſion to recur

again,

ſucceed by improving the circumſtances of the people. Next came the conflict with France, which exemplified at once the inſufficiency of the means hitherto employed, and the urgent neceſſity of binding us to the commonweal, and to each other, by a more impreſſive feeling of affection and intereſt. The feuds of the Iriſh were to be plucked up by the roots. The ſyſtem that cheriſhed theſe contentions was to be abandoned.

Whilſt to every man out of Ireland, the objects of our domeſtic altercations were contemptible, the condition of this kingdom, of Britain, and of Europe, has given the moſt alarming aſpect to their conſequences. Elevated above the conſiderations of a ſelfiſh, or a local nature, which ſway individuals in this iſland, the councils of the Sovereign contemplated the miſchief in its full extent: and in the ſpirit of a wiſe and benignant diſcharge of duty, the crown propoſes a plan of adjuſtment to compoſe the difference for ever; the project is not to be liſtened to:— No, let us rather truſt the repoſe of our country to accident, or to romance; the diſtinctneſs of Parliament is not to be impaired; we muſt not forego the pride of independence! To all this fuſtian it may be replied, that to ſacrifice your comfort to your pride is folly. Parliament is but one of the forms of the conſtitution, the end of which, and the end of independence, is ſocial happineſs;

again, is the habit of ſuſpecting the members of the ſubject religion. They were very properly ſuppoſed to be attached to the houſe of Stuart after the Revolution, but, ever ſince every diſpoſition to that attachment muſt have ceaſed, people are unwilling to admit that there is not ſome other actuating principle of diſaffection.

It is worthy of remark, that there is no other project on foot, which aims, or profeſſes to aim at ſuppreſſing the feuds of the Iriſh people. Thoſe who oppoſe the Union, deſire us to go on in the old way, that is, laying the foundation of diſturbances in bad policy, and repreſſing them by ſanguinary executions.

happineſs; and both good ſenſe, and patriotiſm enjoin, to vary the means, if they do not correſpond to their deſtination.

What in truth is the extent of this independence? and how far does it juſtify the pride and pretenſions that are built upon it? It may not be irrelevant to beſtow a few lines upon this enquiry. Do not expect that I ſhall allow you the choice of weapons, that has been generally made on this occaſion; this double game of two conſtitutions, one for uſe, and one for argument; one which we wield againſt Great-Britain, whilſt we ſmite with the other our own preſuming population. I muſt fix you to that conſtitution, which we have been enrolled together to protect, and which conſiſts with our ſubmiſſion to the legal eſtabliſhments, to the Britiſh crown and empire. I preſume you will willingly circumſcribe yourſelf within theſe limits. If Ireland does really maintain the port and figure of an independent ſtate, nothing leſs than irremediable abuſe in the conduct of public affairs, can juſtify the ſacrifice of national dignity. The deed admits of no alternative:—It is ſuggeſted by the moſt generous feelings of enlightened patriotiſm, by pious ſenſibility, and unbiaſſed diſcernment; or elſe, it is prodigal and profane, and to be ſeverely reprehended. If the pride of place, reflected from the nation to the individual, elevates and invigorates the character of the people; if they are well protected, comfortable, and contented; what Switzerland was, with ſome defects in its political arrangements but what it now has ceaſed to be; then he is a baſe traitor who, even by his ſpeculation, would interrupt the enviable enjoyment. We ſhall conſider how that ſeparateneſs of legiſlature, commonly called the independence of Ireland, operates externally as to rank, and internally

nally as to happineſs. It will be incumbent on me to juſtify the opinion I have formed, by ſtripping our conſtitution of the falſe plumage, in which, for this occaſion, falſe patriotiſm dreſſes it; and I hope to ſhew that Ireland, in order to be practically free, ought to be incorporated with Great-Britain. An Act of Union, framed as we are authoriſed to expect, will prove to the people a ſweat charter of civil liberty. To every other ſide I look in vain for a conſolatory perſpective. Our preſent ſtate of connexion, is indeed, ſubſerviency. If we agree to conſider ourſelves blended with our fellow citizens of Britain in a community of privileges and pretenſions, we of courſe ſtand as equals. If we reſt upon the capacity of a ſeparate, but confederated people, whilſt the confederacy ſubſiſts, we are neceſſarily inferior. Under the ſame head, the ſtate of Ireland will ever be ſubſervient to the ſtate of Britain; but let the ſtates be united, and between the ſubjects reſident in either, locality cannot make an humiliating difference. If ſubſervient, you will reply, we are ſo by our own forms. That may be very well for the few, (for they are but few) who draw advantages from contributing to this accommodation; I do not ſee how it can favourably affect the public. Upon theſe queſtions I muſt invite you to decide. Was Ireland at any time decorated with the conſtitution that is now ſet up? At this hour do we ſubſtantially enjoy it?

In the infancy of the preſent European ſyſtem, it was the fate of Ireland, (whether on an happy or unpropitious moment, it is now too late, and beſide the preſent queſtion, to enqure) to be attached to the fortunes of the ſiſter iſland. At that period, there was little intercourſe even between contiguous ſtates. The great continental powers

powers of our day, were in embrio. Spain and Germany had ſcarcely introduced themſelves to the acquaintance of theſe regions; and Italy would have been as little known, but that it happened to be the reſidence of the Pope, and the center of religious correſpondence. France and Flanders were ſplit into as many diſtinct principalities as there are ſovereignties in modern Europe. Let it not wound the pride of Ireland to hear an hiſtorical fact repeated, which, in her ancient condition, and in the circumſtances of this quarter of the globe, was inevitable: and which, as an Iriſhman, I ſhould pauſe to lament, if the moſt idle of all things were not ſuperfluous and unavailing regret at accidents we cannot redreſs, and at the lot, however hard, that Providence aſſigned to us. A remote country, not naturally very potent, but rendered eminently feeble by internal diſtractions, was neither cultivated nor conſidered by foreign princes; we did not, of courſe, eſtabliſh a foundation for future notice; and when the commerce of ſtates became more perfect, our nationality, with reſpect to them, was merged in that of England. The common, Sovereign naturally repreſented his entire dominion. We do not attend to internal rules between Denmark and Norway, or to the provincial policy of all thoſe regalities that conſtitute the Spaniſh monarchy. We do not take the trouble to diſcriminate the king of Bohemia from the king of Hungary, or either independent ſovereign from the Archduke of Auſtria. In like manner, the potentates who perceive in George the Third, a complete competence to maintain the relations of ſovereignty, witneſſed by his capacity to preſerve his royal faith, and avenge in others the breach of their engagements, never caſt their eyes beyond the Court of St. James's,

James's, to learn by what cuſtomary inſtruments of authority, he fixes the obedience of his ſubjects. The public law of Europe recognizes no ſuch ſtate as independent Ireland; whilſt the rights and poſſeſſion of our executive government, are inſeperably annexed to the Britiſh Crown, it cannot recognize us otherwiſe than as an undiſcriminated portion of that monarchy. The ſtate is repreſented by the prince; it is from their relation to him, and not to Parliament, that individuals derive reſpect and conſideration among foreigners. Europe took no notice of the ſtates of Guelderland and Frieſland, yet theſe and the other members of the Batavian confederacy were perfectly ſovereign and independent among themſelves; inſomuch, that in the diſpute in 1796, relative to the privileges of the Stadholderate, they were at war with each other: ſome were in alliance, and others at enmity with the King of Pruſſia, in his invaſion. We only conſidered the States General, the executive Government by whom the Republic was repreſented. Theſe ſeparate juriſdictions are now broken down into a ſingle repreſentative Government; ſtill our eyes are fixed on the head of the ſtate, we perceive in this reſpect, no diminution of dignity among it's members.

So the Britiſh ſtate is divided into two ſeparate juriſdictions of legiſlation, as it is into three of juriſprudence. Theſe are municipal conventions which regard only the parties. They were inſtituted to ſuit local convenience; and upon a different ſenſe of that convenience, they may, and ought to be new modified. By the ſame reaſon that there are two, there might be twenty diſtinct councils of legiſlation, and the motives which induce

duce us to abridge the number to two, * extended a little further may evince, that we ſhould be more juſtly governed by a ſingle Parliament. The nature and eſſence of the connexion would not change upon an Union eſtabliſhment, although the terms ſhould be ſomewhat varied; and as to rank, and dignity, and importance, we have none without the circle of the monarchy; we have no claims in that reſpect, but as againſt Great Britain, our co-eſtate, our equal and co-member; and I call upon any man to ſhew how the relation of theſe nations to each other, would be altered by an Union. The degree of ſtrength and reſource, which each part contributes to the common ſtock is the real ground, upon which it can expect to be conſidered. Limited, as our independence is, to a certain ſphere of action, will you ſeriouſly tell me that we are more reſpectable, becauſe the ſyſtem of our Union is a ſhade or two more intricate? Although as to each other, Great Britain and Ireland are diſtinct provinces, in the contemplation of mankind, they already form an incorporated ſtate, under a ſingle head, with all the external appearance of an united people. Our common prince leads us, at his diſcretion, to war and peace, with an entire conjunction of intereſt; he acts and regulates jointly for us, and ſupports in our mutual behalf, all the offices of good and bad neighbourhood. The united Iriſhmen propoſed to introduce this iſland into the world, in the new character of a ſubſtantive Government. I reject and reprobate their deſign, with feelings ſuch as might be expected to ariſe in the boſom of an Engliſhman; if a ſcheme were propounded to revive, under a republican

* There were formerly, in either kingdom, two houſes of convocation. Why were theſe aſſemblies diſcontinued? from motives of convenience, to check the growth of faction and avoid the miſchief of ſo many deliberative councils.

republican form, any denomination of the Heptarchy. It is too late, at the end of 600 years, to look out for new relations and dependencies. Blended in races, by the intercommunity of that ſpace of time; aſſimilated in manners, in cuſtoms, and in language, it is now too late to diſturb the throne of King George with the antiquated dignity of King Roderic. But then, the abettors of this plan have ſomething to hold by, in their argument for independence; whilſt, to uſe the words of our act of Parliament, "the Crown of Ireland is inſeparably knit to the Imperial Crown of England," our mouths are cloſed; this land can have no place or influence in the world, except what belongs to it as a member of the empire. The conſpirators were aware of this difficulty, and they attacked the law, the parliament, and the conſtitution. They were perſuaded that your veſtry, or grand jury parliament, is a falſe foundation of grandeur; and, as national elevation was their object, or pretence, they quite conſiſtently aimed at the eſtabliſhment of an appropriate, oſtenſible government, to maintain our conſequence with alien powers. They ſet up againſt the entire conſtitution, thoſe rights which you oppoſe only to ſuch parts as do not ſuit your purpoſe. The Gallican innovators reaſoned juſtly enough upon falſe premiſes: if that pride of nationality, which the politicians of your ſchool aſſert only againſt Great-Britain, were neceſſary to national happineſs; if the vanity of holding a rank among ſtates, was either a wiſe, a ſalutary, or a juſt purſuit; then, the means, which theſe perſons pointed out, and theſe only, ought to be adopted. On your principles, without the dignity of being a ſeparate ſtate, we have all the inconvenience of being a ſeparated people. It is mere deluſion, mere credulity to apprehend

prehend that this kingdom ſtands more high in general eſtimation, by reaſon of the bye-laws of it's connection with a people, at the diſtance of 60 miles; ſubjects of the ſame prince, in the ſame right and with the ſame intereſt.

The definition of our political eſtabliſhment is, a qualified ſovereignty, veſted in an aſſembly, which may be a wiſe and virtuous ſenate, but cannot pretend to be a popular delegation. From the law and uſage of the empire it derives a right to bind the ſubjects of this land. This is the beginning and the end of it's juriſdiction; and all the tokens and evidences of its conſtitution are not imperial, but municipal. If ſupreme, in the ſenſe that vanity ſuggeſts, why may we not act againſt any power we think fit? why not freely make contracts with any ſtate? why in either caſe, do we permit the duty of Britiſh connexion to bar or trammel our prerogative?—We are bound by affection. Then indeed, it was merely to check the devious wanderings of the heart, that the kingdom has reeked with blood from the gibbet and the whipping poſt. I am warranted in affirming, that Ireland is not legally or practically competent to make any aſſumption of authority which may be inconvenient to Great Britain. The vote of either, or of both Houſes of Parliament, would not protect a man from the penalties of high treaſon, who proceeded to Paris under that ſanction, to negociate with the Convention. We have no Iriſh juriſdiction with which any foreigner would treat unleſs he propoſed to foment rebellion; no individuals whoſe execution, for the very crime of confederating with him againſt the Britiſh Crown, he could reſent as an infraction of ſettled law and juſtice. Our Third Eſtate is, by fundamental proviſion, which we cannot alter, placed beyond

our controul, and entirely within that of the ſiſter nation. She is enabled to employ the direct influence of his negative, and his indirect influence, as diſpenſer of the public patronage, and (equal in importance to either prerogative) his ſituation as repreſentative of the community, in order to reſtrict our independence within the limits ſhe preſcribes to it. How does this fettered functionary reſemble the repreſentative of a ſovereign people? Whilſt it ſits upon incapacities and confiſcations, how can Parliament pretend to juſtify its rights, by a popular, or national title? What, beſide a deference for legal and preſcriptive eſtabliſhments, can render palatable ſuch repreſentative fictions as Harriſtown or Clogher? Numberleſs queſtions of this kind might be propoſed without the poſſibility of obtaining a ſatisfactory reply, from thoſe who pretend to trace the prerogative of parliament to a higher origin than municipal regulation:—you cannot carry the claim one ſtep farther back, without ſetting up King James's parliament, which was declared to be a treaſonable meeting; and the Aſſembly of Confederates at Kilkenny, who forfeited their eſtates, for acting, in virtue of an unequivocal delegation of the *people*. Our own deeds, over and over again, bar our claim to imperial ſplendor. We never looked upon the ſceptre, but to declare our incompetence to wield it: *— We reſigned the lofty

* Thoſe writers, who have treated of the connexion between Great-Britain and Ireland, with temper and good ſenſe, and not in the wild rant of declamatory ſpeculation, admit that the great queſtions of peace and war, religion, commerce and revenue, ought to be finally ſettled to the ſatisfaction of Great-Britain. (See pamphlet by Richard Jebb Eſq. pages 24 and 25.) Now, it appears to me, that if a ſeparate Parliament be good for any thing, it ſhould exiſt for the purpoſe of giving conſequence to Ireland in theſe very deliberations.

loſty pretenſion, when we ſurrendered to King Henry II.—We reſigned it more fully and formally in the reign of Henry VIII. when we enacted that whoſoever reigned in England, and under whatſoever colour, ſhould of courſe, be the ſovereign of Ireland. Thus admitting, that the line of ſucceſſion might poſſibly be interrupted by a title differing from that of direct deſcent; and in the ſame moment, renouncing any right of option, enquiry or diſcrimination. The arrangement of 1782, merely went to remove a concurrent juriſdiction of the Britiſh and Iriſh Parliaments. It made no alteration in the rights of the Britiſh Crown, to the obedience of the Iriſh people. A ſtrong illuſtration of this law of Henry VIII, and in exact conformity to its doctrine, was the caſe of Ireland under James II. That Prince ſucceeded to a long line of anceſtors; he had, of courſe every claim that could be derived from the moſt obvious of our prejudices. Although his adminiſtration might have diſguſted the people of England, the Iriſh could not be diſpleaſed with his meaſures, for the means did not affect them, and the end coincided with their ſentiments. Far from abdicating the Crown of Ireland, he came into the realm and challenged the protection of his ſubjects. The entire authority of the ſtate was poſſeſſed by his officers. A parliament, by election at leaſt as free, by national concurrence at leaſt as popular, as any that ever ſat in Ireland, very

deliberations. When theſe points are waved, matters of internal regulation alone remain, and here it is that the Iriſh Parliament is moſt liable to error, on account of the partial bias under which it acts; ſo that Mr. Jebb propoſes to ſurrender thoſe prerogatives of Parliament, which might poſſibly be uſeful, and which certainly give an air of dignity. And he would preſerve functions, the exerciſe of which has been leaſt beneficial, moſt reprehenſible and moſt obnoxious.

very warmly eſpouſed his cauſe, and a people almoſt unanimous, took up arms to defend it. On the other hand was King William, invited to govern by a private deputation of Engliſh noblemen; confirmed on the throne not even by an Engliſh parliament, but by a convention of eſtates, and the doubtful acquieſcence of the people. He claimed the crown, under an appointment on which Ireland was not conſulted; to which, far from concurring, ſhe gave every teſtimony of diſſatisfaction; yet the Iriſh, preſuming to reſiſt loyalty thus acquired, and exerciſed in deſpite and contempt of their opinion, their reſiſtance was treated as rebellion, and puniſhed by a very extenſive confiſcation. In the glory of that empire, of which Ireland conſtitutes a moſt eſſential member, there are many things to inſpire a generous pride, an elevated conſciouſneſs of dignity; but when you detach the pride of ſeparated Ireland from the aggregate fund of honour in which the entire ſtate participates, I am obliged to aſk, where can an Iriſhman caſt his eyes to ſeek for the evidence of his national dignity? We choſe a monarch, he was expelled; we choſe a religion, it was proſtrated; and adherence to the one or to the other, was animaverted on by heavy penalties. With what prodigality was the ancient blood of Ireland ſhed? With what vindictive profuſion was the proprietary body diſſipated? Was it, that they betrayed the dignity of Ireland? No; for they were the Ireland of their day. But becauſe, prepoſſeſſed with this very diſtinctneſs, they endeavoured to aſſume the port of an integral people, aſſociated, but not blended, whoſe will, expreſſed ſeparately from that of England, was entitled to ſome deference; and in purſuance of this opinion, they thwarted the favourite meaſures of the empire: And had thoſe who capitu-

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lated with the Crown of England fewer and inferior rights, than perſons who came in under that power, and were planted and nurſed by it into opulence? Or do gentlemen claim by a Tartar tranſmigration, to inherit the pretenſions of the men whom they deſtroyed? It is not decent, to propound tenets as legitimate now, which were deemed unlawful when held by the Aborigines of the land. The anceſtors of the forfeiting Iriſh might indeed be preſumed to have made terms, for their ſettlement was antecedent to the royal title: upon popular notions, what beſide compact with *them* could give a colour to that title? Admit the Iriſh to be a ſeparate people in right of what are called firſt principles, to which you oppoſers of the Union, have become ſo fond of reſorting, and upon which, you imagine the prerogative of diſtinct legiſlation ſtands, as on a rock, eternal and inviolate; you will then perceive to what abſurdities we are betrayed, when we travel beyond poſitive inſtitutions. If Britain be an alien power, if the King's ſubjects of the ſiſter iſland be foreigners, there is not a tenable eſtabliſhment in the country. All the proceedings I have recited, the ſpoliation of property included, were tyrannical and unjuſt, and ought to be reſcinded. But we are not a ſeparate people, but a part of the Britiſh aggregate; ſuch are we in the eyes of the world, and ſuch are we rendered by theſe fundamental laws, which far from diſturbing, you propoſe to cheriſh; and the adherents of the proſcribed eſtabliſhments in Church and State, were a minority of the empire. The preſent forms of Ireland cannot be defended upon any other conſtruction. The conſtitution of your ſtate, even the titles of your lands, are documents of this fact, that Ireland is actually but a branch of the undivided Empire. Whilſt I write, a law is on its way through Parliament, to

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ſupply, what is ſuppoſed (able lawyers ſay erroneouſly, and the ſpirit of the inſtitution ſupports their aſſertion) to be an omitted caſe in the catalogue of conceſſions. By this bill, in caſe the ſtation of regent of theſe realms ſhould at any time become neceſſary, the nomination is excluſively conferred upon the Britiſh Parliament. Obſerve, that to confirm a Regent is a parliamentary function, and the Iriſh Houſe of Commons, who refuſe to be mixed with the repreſentatives of Britain, muſt here admit their body to be an improper depoſitary of this prerogative. I do not notice with diſapprobation any act that binds, or affects to bind the ſiſter nations to each other. But I ground upon this avowal, an argument againſt the propriety of preferring a ſeparate, to an United Legiſlature, when it muſt be admitted, that the former can, only by its ſacrifices, reconcile its exiſtence with that of the Empire. I ground an argument upon it of the abſurdity of cheriſhing that tribunal, as a piece of national importance, which gentlemen acknowledge, unfit to exerciſe the high prerogatives for which it demands our reverence. I ſee no paramount or pre-eminent token of conſideration, reſerved to Ireland except the *droit de potence*,* which is, in truth, poſſeſſed in ample plenarty. And as I cannot diſcover, that our national dignity is advanced, by being governed by the poſſeſſor of the Engliſh Crown, and a ſeparate legiſlature; neither can I admit, that we ſhould be debaſed, by the rule of the ſame prince, and a general delegation from every quarter of the empire. I have endeavoured to argue this queſtion, with a view

* The right of inflicting capital puniſhment, teſtified by a gibbet ſtanding on the manor, called "le droit de potence", was an high ſource of pride to the barons on the continent

a view to ſhew that the incorporation, now propoſed, is no material deviation from the ſettled practice, under which our anceſtors have lived for generations; and that it involves no matter of deliberation, except that care of the public weal, by which every legiſlative act is, or ought to be directed. Prudence ſhould decide whether the affairs of the empire are like to be better conducted on the ſyſtem of a ſingle, or of a double legiſture? In the ſhape of a point of honor the reflection is idly and intemperately urged, however it may deſerve to be maturely weighed, as a conſideration of expediency.

There are men who will call this ſtatement, (may I venture to pronounce it fairly ſupported by fact and argument?) a diminution of my country's honor. It is eaſy to perceive for what purpoſe they enliſt theſe lofty pretenſions in their ſervice. Let them be ſucceſsful, and you will only trace the claim in the puniſhment of a deluded multitude, who are attracted by the name, and who cannot ſo readily caſt away their predilections. High-ſounding appellations coſt little; they may be beſtowed with indiſcriminate facility on any cauſe or party. There are theſe among the oppoſers of the Union, who would cry up the government of Turky, if they happened to be baſhaws, and find the golden dreams of republican felicity realized in Venice, if fate had placed them among its ariſtocracy. If it be true that neither dignity, nor convenience are attached to our political condition, what motive can there be to ſuppreſs a fact, to us eſſential to be underſtood? Is it the honor of Ireland to raiſe falſe conceits of a grandeur that does not exiſt, and draw the people by means of it from the purſuit of their genuine welfare? Is it honourable, in order to render us leſs than we ought to be, to flatter us with the notion

tion of being ſomewhat more than we are? No, the ambition, the pride, the profit of individuals are thus held out, as the dignity and public good of Ireland; and will you be the deluded and deluding accomplice of that error? Not a peaſant but is trampled to the earth, if he preſumes to rear his creſt in the ſpirit, nay in the letter of your claims to independent right, and of your jealouſies againſt Great-Britain. I have laid down the conſtitution of Ireland, not as carved out or enforced by our potent ſiſter; but as it ſtands, the creature of our own egiſlature, deliberately adopted by the high-minded Parliament of 1782, in the full career of victorious triumph. I deſcribe our political eſtabliſhment, not as any gentleman pleaſes to decorate it to his own imagination, but as it practically and ſubſtantially exiſts; as it has been interpreted throughout that copious catalogue of confiſcations which compoſes the hiſtory of this hitherto unhappy iſland; as it formed the ſtandard of guilt and innocence before King Charles's Court of Claims, and the preſent commiſſioners for ſuffering loyaliſts. You may repair to Vinegar-hill, and utter ſighs for a purer independence; but clearly the preſent conſtitution of Ireland cannot be ſupported on the foot of pride; for the Prince who repreſents the ſtate, is the point to which pride ſhould be directed; and in that reſpect the union with England has been complete for ſome centuries. The conſtitution you defend, is that which neceſſitates dependence. Sicily, Spain, Achaia were provinces to Rome. They were adminiſtered by a Proconſul ſent from the center of the empire, whoſe proceedings were guided by inſtructions from the metropolis. The inhabitants of Italy ſtood in a very different relation to the Republic. They enjoyed common franchiſes with the actual reſidents of Rome, forming, like them

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a conſtituent part of the ſupreme authority. The former was the ſubordinate ſtate, the latter the participating people. The firſt, is the condition in which Ireland is actually placed; the ſecond, that to which an Union would advance her.*

Although the policy of a diſtinct parliament confers no external conſequence on Ireland, the inſtitution muſt be put to another teſt, and there perhaps, its merits will be conſpicuous. I mean to turn to our domeſtic ſituation. The mediocrity of rank will ſit lightly on the friend to Ireland, if, in the abſence of oſtentatious ſplendour, he ſees peace, content, and comfort—the conſolations of obſcurity. We muſt then look for the kind effects of parliamentary vigilance in a proſperous ſtate of ſociety, in proviſions for the people's happineſs; we ſhall find it illuſtrated in the liberal confidence that a free people repoſes in the delegates of their choice, and their chearful ſubmiſſion to an authority they approve of. Affectionate ſolicitude for their conſtituents will diſtinguiſh the repreſentative body, and frank acquieſcence be the characteriſtic of the ſubject. Governments which are not powerful, have uſually their recompence in being paternal.—Really, if the ſtate of Ireland preſents this picture, it were ſacrilege to deface it. What is the fact? It is on this ſide our wounds are green: It is here the poignard has been driven home, and every expectation moſt miſerably falſified. Such is

* Suppoſe, which is not the fact, that Ireland was become a province by an Union; the Catholics are in this ſenſe, at preſent provincials to the imperial Proteſtants: the Proteſtants are provincials to the more imperial borough-holders. Now if the ſuperiority of each part over the other be removed, the good of the multitude, upon whom this advantage would be conferred, more than compenſates to the nation for the diminution, if any, of its luſtre.

Scilicet ut Turno contingat Regia conjux.

is the ſtate of ſociety in Ireland, ſuch the eternal ſtruggle between rich and poor, not unlike the wars waged between the Indian tribes, and the back ſettlements of North America that if the meaſure of our pride were full, and that we were eminently diſtinguiſhed among nations, it would be wiſdom and compaſſion to renounce our trophies, and ſeek in an humbler rank, a milder and more practicable rule of polity. Perhaps you will tell me that we have Britiſh laws and inſtitutions. We certainly have; and the reſult of theſe parallel eſtabliſhments, with regard to ſecurity, to the conſideration of the individual, and to civil accommodation in general, is, in the one country, the very contraſt of the other: It here is diſcontent, and there ſatisfaction. How will you reconcile theſe facts? My ſolution of the difficulty is, that a chain of circumſtances which I ſhall preſently enumerate, rendered the eſtabliſhment abortive as to Ireland; that the ſyſtem was laid upon a baſis not calculated to uphold the ſuperſtructure. I feel that I do not addreſs theſe reflections to a man, who would think panegyrics on Parliament cheaply made at the expence of the people's character. Such patriots are however to be found; and they will attribute the failure of civil ſociety in this land, to that common place invective, the perverſe temper, and evil diſpoſition of the Iriſh. "General accuſations," ſaid upon ſome occaſion our illuſtrious countryman, (that luminary of Europe, whom Heaven has withdrawn to the repoſe of his exalted virtue) "although they involve many, are only concluſive teſtimony againſt one." I diſcard every aſſertion founded on the preſumption of general character, exiſting independent of collateral cauſes, not produced, nor ſubject to be changed by them. Man is every where moulded by the ſituation in which he is placed, and from the thriftieſt huſ-

bandman,

bandman, to the moſt prodigal wanderer on earth, he is uniformly the creature of the circumſtances that act upon him. We have been placed under bad laws, and the effect is matter of aſtoniſhment. Remove this Iriſhman, whom they accuſe of indolence to a new ſcene, and to the influence of kind encouragements, and mark the active enterpriſe by which he is diſtinguiſhed. Inebriety and idleneſs in our common people are not the cauſe, but the effects of our public diſorders; upon theſe the ſhort ſighted patriot may diſcharge his ſpleen with unavailing indignation, whilſt the root of the miſchief, the ſyſtem remains unmoleſted. Gentlemen muſt recollect, that the humble man has his value: In ſocial life a function of high, of very high importance is aſſigned to him. Some means muſt be deviſed to allay the fever of vigilance, ſuſpicion and jealouſy, and to correct the habit of buſy intermeddling which diſturb him. Perhaps you will doubt the reality of this officious harraſſing? You are not converſant with the parts of the country it infeſts. It is not to be met in the metropolis, nor generally in the cultivated ſeats of the linen manufacture. You do not witneſs the evil, nor hear the complaint of thoſe who feel it. If you ſeek for information, you are likely to conſult the man, who exempt from the laſh himſelf, and not employing it, is inadvertent to the conduct of others. The law gave to a part of the people magiſterial powers over another. The law has yielded to a better ſenſe of public good. But, though the letter of the law does not give them the uſual countenance, ſome men are found, enough for the purpoſes of irritation, tenacious of theſe magiſterial habits; and ſuch men will be found, until a radical change of maxims ſhall render their poſition untenable. Do not ſuppoſe I mean to level this cenſure againſt any religious deſcription.

Thoſe

Thoſe who err in the exerciſe of power, muſt of courſe belong to that diviſion, to which power is confined, but ſurely the men of whom I ſpeak are a minority, a narrow and a deſpicable minority.—How have I rambled in this deſcription! Let the man in humble life be protected, and treated with regard, and he will be frugal. If he is to be religious, communicate to him ſome better impreſſions, than thoſe he has received. If you cannot ſucceed in this attempt, or will not try the experiment, do not weaken his attachments, treat with reſpect the things and perſons he is uſed to reverence.* "May I live, ſaid the Great Henry, to ſee every peaſant in my dominions, eat his fowl in

* Unleſs it is wiſhed to plunge this country into irredeemable barbariſm, the body of Clergy, from whom a great part of the people chooſe to receive religious conſolation, ought in common prudence to meet a very conſiderable degree of attention and encouragement. Inſtead of this, the Catholic Prieſt, is, in ſome places, treated by our rural magiſtrates as a ſort of wizard, who is to be anſwerable for the demeanour of the Pariſh. For his example and doctrines he ought to be ſtrictly reſponſible; but if this be extended far, no man will enter into that miniſtry who in any reſpect is fit for it. It is inevitable to have a Catholic Clergy in this kingdom; a very important care then ſhould be, to have that Clergy of the beſt poſſible deſcription; ſo reſpectable, as a body, and individually, that they ſhall ſet a value upon both public and private reputation, and dread the diminution of either. Well-inſtructed men ſhould be provided, and induced to undertake this function, as ſuch only are fit to conduct the people, and mould their character. It was at all times a matter of precarious policy, to ſend an order of men, ſo important to this kingdom, as the Romiſh Prieſthood, to ſeek education in a foreign country, at the hazard of being alienated from their own. This inconvenience is however at an end, as the eſtabliſhments for that purpoſe have periſhed in the preſent troubles on the Continent. Still a clergy is to be ſupplied to the wants of the people, and candidates will not be backward for that function. You muſt have this Clergy of one kind or the other cultivated or illiterate; the powerful men of the country are to decide; they may incline the balance either way. Let them be aſſured, that if they ſuffer this order to be debaſed, the people

all

in comfort."* Let them come to the fight! is the war-hoop of Ireland.

More penalties have been ordained in this kingdom ſince the commencement of the 18th century, than in any other country during any ſpace of time whatever. And the reſult, as might moſt naturally be expected, was to leave the people in their primitive condition, as to manners, as to comfort, and cordiality with the government. The end of legiſlation elſewhere, is to protect man againſt man; but here it was an entrenchment thrown up, in order to fortify one people againſt another.‡ I do not propoſe either to juſtify or impeach

will ſink with them. A rational laity will not ſubſiſt under an Abiſſinian Prieſthood. If they will not accept of the chriſtianity of the poliſhed Catholic world, they may have thoſe abject ſuperſtitions that exiſt under the name of Chriſtianity, in ſome parts of the Turkiſh dominions near the Archipelago. The government has, by the eſtabliſhment of the College at Maynooth, ſhewn a moſt laudable diſpoſition. But one is aſtoniſhed to find that the inſtitution meets very aſſiduous oppoſition from a party, who in general diſplay their zeal againſt their Catholic fellow-citizens. Moral inſtruction is to be provided for four millions of the people, and can any man regret that the ſtate takes up the cauſe, and contributes to it moſt bountifully? Is the inſtruction of millions to be compared to the accommodation of a ſingle pariſh? Having ſaid ſo much on this ſubject, I ſhall add, that the project of making proviſion for the Catholic Clergy is not ſo eaſy of execution as at firſt view it appears to be. Something of that nature might be practicable, and in many reſpects uſeful.

* See in Sully's Memoirs this intereſting anecdote.

‡ An anonymous writer, whom I have before me, expreſſes with ſo much juſtice and good ſenſe the ſentiments I wiſh to convey, that I ſhall tranſcribe his words. Speaking of the religious liberty granted by the Empreſs Maria Thereſa, he ſays. "It has been obſerved even in its firſt operation, to have produced, particularly in Hungary, the happieſt effects. The moſt mortal animoſities ſubſiſted between the Roman Catholics and Proteſtants in that country, occaſioned by the power which the laws afforded to the worſt members of one communion *(who are thoſe that are always buſy in ſuch matters)* to grieve and harraſs even the beſt of the other. The taking way of this *unnatural and ill-beſtowed power* has ſtrongly operated

impeach the ſtate expediency of theſe proceedings. In a general ſyſtem of ſeverity, poſſibly no particular meaſure might have been miſplaced; one harſh exertion of authority created the neceſſity of another. They were the laws of war; they were the lines and outpoſts of a garriſon. Be it that thoſe rigid courſes were neceſſary to protect the recently acquired property, you will not therefore require of me to receive them, as a peace eſtabliſhment of morality. It is enough for my argument, that in the agency of the Iriſh legiſlature, a competent cauſe is to be aſſigned for the ill-condition of its ſubjects. The Britiſh branches of our ſtate occaſionally interfered to correct the ſpirit of angry legiſlation, but never to excite it. Theſe Popery laws never found an advocate out of Ireland; they were diſcredited in appeals to Weſtminſter. Lord Camden and Lord Mansfield were the firſt who cried ſhame upon the ſyſtem. Lenity came from abroad, whilſt harſhneſs was the immediate and natural propenſity of our own government; no unfavourable omen for the meditated change; no light inducement to prefer the uſual compoſition of the Britiſh Legiſlature, to the native rule, recommended by volumes of coercive laws, and a century of inauſpicious interference.

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rated to ſubdue all animoſity and diſſenſion, and it probably may not be long, when both they and the cauſes from which they originated will be equally forgotten."

* Mr. Jebb who treated this ſubject at its outſet, with a degree of good ſenſe, to which little has been added, ſpeaks of the Catholic queſtion as a matter requiring the appropriate interference of the Iriſh Parliament. I beg leave to call that gentleman's attention to the facts I here ſtate; from what appeared to the public, it muſt ſeem that the relief of the Catholics was effectually debated in the Britiſh Cabinet.

After the revolution war, the ſpirits of the Iriſh were completely broken: It is impoſſible to ſuppoſe, that with the aid of a conciliatory adminiſtration, they might not have been rendered uſeful and obedient ſubjects to the new ſucceſſion. The Highland clans engaged rather more zealouſly in the cauſe of the houſe of Stuart. They felt the wrath of the government which they had exaſperated; but precaution and puniſhment were temporary, and a calm was permitted to ſucceed. That bulwark of the empire, which Scotland is, Ireland would have become, had ſhe been bleſſed by a ſimilar policy; and reſourceleſs as we are, would Scotland have remained, had the grantees of forfeited eſtates been negligently permitted to eſtabliſh themſelves in the government, at once independent of the crown and of the people, and with their power to tranſmit their jealouſies to poſterity.* The propriety of theſe forfeitures is no queſtion for modern inveſtigation. They come to us ſanctioned by the laws of property, and ſacred let them remain for ever. But I may be permitted to lament the conſequences of the event. I may be permitted to arraign the inexpedient policy that accompanied it. When England changed the property of this land, ſhe ought to have taken meaſures to prevent the claſhing of the old and new pretenſions. Againſt the old indeed, ſhe effectually provided, but took no precaution againſt the probable

* It is ſtrange that when gentlemen impeached the efficacy of the Union, on the evidence of the Scotch rebellions, they did not perceive the inference to be directly againſt their opinion. The Union-government could not be put to a better teſt than this. It has withdrawn the Scotch from an ancient prepoſſeſſion, which three times prompted them to take up arms, and under which they were on many occaſions ready to act, if circumſtances permitted. See Lockart's Memoirs.

ble errors of the new. She gave us a government of hereditary alarmiſts, whoſe minds, fatigued with the eternal apprehenſion of reaſſumption, would never ſettle, and would never permit a ſettlement to form about them. Your notions of political propriety will probably be ſhocked at my aſſertion, that ſimple monarchy, without repreſentation, had been preferable to the repreſentation of a party. So at the preſent day, a repreſentation, which does not tell for all deſcriptions of the people, is better altered than adhered to, for it can never produce an impartial and uniform adminiſtration.

It was religion ſay ſome; it was democracy ay others, the prevalent perverſion of the hour, and tranſitory as its cauſe, which alienated the people from their duties.* Give me leave to aſſert that it was neither the one nor the other. A principle was planted in our conſtitution, when it received the ſeeds of life, and unfolded itſelf at maturity. It was foſtered by the manifold diſcouragements under which the common Iriſh labour, by the intercourſe between ſquire and peaſant, and by every thing that throws into the hands of the former an exorbitant authority; it was the reſult of that ſentiment, ſo frequently diſavowed; yet ſo aſſiduouſly encouraged, that the maſs of the people are to be ſuſpected. Religion, it is true, was the catch-word of diſcountenance; the victories of the French Republic ſuggeſted

* A queſtion is very often put, why may not the Iriſh Parliament inveſtigate and redreſs the grievances of the country? why could not the French nobility, aſſembled in their chambers of notables, redreſs the inconvenience of the people? Becauſe, joined to all the other difficulties of drawing them to the diſcuſſion, one of the moſt inconvenient things in the ſtate was their own conſtitution. An Incorporating Union is the only change that can be made in Ireland, conſiſtent with the ſecurity of the propertied, and the rational encouragement of the non-propertied claſſes.

ſuggeſted a time for inſurrection, and the intrigues of that government opened a probability of ſuccour. But the agents of France had nothing to create; they found a vigorous ſpirit of inſubordination. They found confidence circumſcribed within narrow limits; the pale of property ſomewhat wider; but then, an immenſe gulph between the rich man and Lazarus, beyond the confines of which, no attachment to the ſtate was known; no feeling but thoſe of outlaws, on a doubtful frontier. Let me induce you to aſcertain the fact, by paſſing with me in a ſlight ſurvey of our modern hiſtory.

From the cloſe of the Revolution war, by the ſurrender of Limerick, to the acceſſion of George the Third, this country enjoyed, for near ſeventy years, a ceſſation of hoſtilities; no ſterility; no ravages of famine, peſtilence or enemy; no aſſignable cauſe of backwardneſs, but what aroſe from political circumſtances. It is uſual to impute a great deal to the commercial reſtrictions; but how many diſtricts are there, equal in ſize to Ireland, in which no interchange of commodities is known beyond the rude produce of the earth? And yet the boors or peaſants are at peace with themſelves, and with their ſuperiors, and live in the coarſe comfort of ruſtic competence, and ſimple civilization. Here ſeventy years of calm, only prepared the way for thirty-five years of inſurrection. There was in Munſter an annual riſing of White-Boys, from 1763, to 1776; whilſt the propertied claſſes were arrayed in arms, during the war of America, this other diſorder ceaſed; in 1785, it again broke out by the name of Right-Boys. From about 1786, to a recent date, under the very noſe of Government, an open war was waged in the county

of Armagh* between Proteſtants and Catholics, until the latter were completely rooted out, and ſent through the land to diſſeminate diſaffection againſt the government, which had permitted theſe exceſſes. In 1792 and 1793 there was a riſing in Louth, Meath, Limerick, Roſcommon, Leitrim, Weſtmeath; beſides Hearts of Oak, and Hearts of Steel, Peep of Day Boys, and Defenders, United-men and Orange-men. Were the example, or the contagion, or the intrigues of France, acceſſary to theſe miſchiefs, thirty years before the revolution of France was thought of? Our Parliament has undoubtedly never been niggard of remedial penalties: jubeo eum, (like Moliere's Doctor) ſaignereri, atque reſaignereri. But no preventative was enquired after. The diſeaſe recurred with unabated vehemence, and will never ceaſe to recur, until the tenure of power be generally changed, and the objectionable occupants of ſubordinate authority either varied, or corrected; and until the government be rendered ſtrong in behalf of the neglected peaſant, againſt thoſe who immediately interfere with him. I feel that details are invidious; let us avoid them by ſtudying the caſe of our country in the analogies of other nations. Why have Greece and Italy degenerated?† Why does the Mameluke government

* From what we know of the conduct of the Britiſh Houſe of Commons, could it be ſuppoſed that open hoſtility ſhould be carried on for months, battles publickly fought, and notices given to perſons, under penalty of death, to quit their habitations, in any territory, ſubject to its juriſdiction, without parliamentary inveſtigation and redreſs?

† "Let us exemplify this matter by a more recent change, compare the Engliſh of the preſent day with thoſe under Henry III. Edward VI. Mary and Elizabeth. This people, now ſo humane, indulgent, learned, free, and induſtrious, ſuch lovers of the arts and philoſophy, were then nothing more than a nation of ſlaves, inhuman and ſuperſtitious, without arts, and without induſtry."—Helvetius's Treatiſe on Man.

government in Egypt produce the moſt wretched ſubjects in the world? From theſe you may paſs to another queſtion of as eaſy ſolution. Why is the credulity of the Iriſh open to receive impreſſions from every impoſtor who promiſes to improve their circumſtances? Why are they ſo ready to exclaim—we may profit, but we cannot ſuffer from a ſtate of turbulence?

Summary juriſdiction has crept upon us, until at length, the trial by jury is univerſally ſuſpended. To what extent the arbitrary diſcretion of magiſtrates is permitted, let thoſe bills declare, by which they are indemnified and re-indemnified. We have peopled the navy with malcontents; we have colonized with them the outcaſt ſettlement of New-Holland; we now call in the aid of Pruſſian diſcipline to their correction: merely to keep the veſſel of the ſtate afloat, we have been conſtrained to throw over board the moſt uſeful and valuable effects. As to the neceſſity of theſe meaſures, take conceſſions the moſt ample, they only tend to ſtrengthen my argument. The partition is ſlender between Governments who voluntarily employ force, and thoſe to whoſe exiſtence force has become eſſential. I admit, that come whence it may, the fanaticiſm of revolution was to be repreſſed with vigour. My argument and my concluſions run in a very different direction. You do not wiſh to govern by violent means, but ſo completely are the ſubjects alienated from your government, that theſe means are not to be diſpenſed with. Then in the name of common ſenſe, is this the eulogium of the principles upon which our ſtate is conſtituted?* Is it to ſtand on this foun-

 dation?

* In a very judicious pamphlet on this ſubject, under the title of "A Friend to Ireland." I have noticed an argument, which may acquire ſome currency from the manner in which it is put, but

dation? Great Britain has been aſſailed by the ſame epidemic rage for innovation; yet ſhe has not been conſtrained to alter the landmarks of her conſtitution; a well aſſorted diſtribution of powers preſerved the popularity of her government. Power is not judiciouſly balanced in this kingdom, and popularity never was ſought for; enquire of that comprehenſive chain of diſabilities that runs through your ſtatute book, whether the favor of the people was ever eſteemed or cultivated by the men who regulated this iſland. Aſk it of your annals. The

but when examined, will be found to make againſt the cauſe it is employed to vindicate. The author touches us on a point, where we ought to be ſenſible; the adminiſtration of juſtice. He compares the conduct of the Britiſh Parliament, on the complaint made of the ſentence againſt Mr. Muir, Mr. Gerald, and others, convicted of ſedition, with the proceedings of the Iriſh Houſe in the matter of the Piats iſſued againſt Mr. Magee, and, the exhorbitant bail required of him. In the former caſe, the Judge, he ſays, was applauded, in the latter only "not cenſured."

In the Scotch cauſe, the judges were vindicated, as acting in ſtrict conformity to the law of the land, and the Houſe of Commons ſanctioned their proceeding. In the Iriſh caſe, no perſon ventured to utter a ſyllable in defenſe of the judge, and nevertheleſs he came off with impuninity. The proceeding in Scotland, rather reſembled the attachment cauſe againſt Mr. Stephens Reilly, which came into Parliament, and was defended there on controverted authorities. There were other complaints made, before the caſe of Magee, againſt the adminiſtration of juſtice, but I do not find that the magiſtrates incurred cenſure. At preſent we hear no murmur of diſſatisfaction on this head, thanks to the fortunate ſelection of judges, which is not a parliamentary prerogative.

Now, let me ſay one word, for the different execution of the law in both countries. Here, it generally requires an armed force to take a poſſeſſion under legal authority. The great Douglas cauſe, both on account of the rank of the parties, and the value of the eſtate, created the moſt univerſal intereſt through Scotland. When the houſe of Peers made its deciſion, the decree of poſſeſſion was carried into effect by the Sheriff unaccompanied.

It was not until after the Union, that the uſe of torture in Scotland was aboliſhed by the united legiſlature.

The repreſenting body has lived near a century in open hoſtility with the repreſented, and exhauſted againſt them the whole artillery of penal legiſlation. To my mind, the inference is irreſiſtible againſt the form of political eſtabliſhment, that aroſe under theſe diſadvantages.

Which right of an Iriſh citizen will be abridged, which will ceaſe to flouriſh, in conſequence of an incorporating Union with Great Britain? Not the trial by jury. Not the privilege of free inveſtigation. Not the ſecurity of perſon and property. Let me put it to the conſcience of any man, who is pleaſed to beſtow a moment's notice on theſe remarks, will the ſcheme of government they recommend, interfere in the moſt remote degree with his comforts, with his means of induſtry, and with his independence? Will it impoſe, ſhould the meaſure take effect, ſubſerviency on any individual? Will he be leſs than he now is, maſter of his thoughts, or of his actions, of his pride, or of his property? Certain Gentlemen do not chooſe to forego their parliamentary ſituations, and others wiſh to keep the avenue open for their ambition. Of all others, it is ungracious in thoſe, who never winced at coercive ſeverities, to oppoſe a meaſure offered as the baſis of conciliation, and as the means to prevent in future the lamentable neceſſity of theſe examples.

I am aware that ſome of my opinions may be liable to miſconſtruction, and in a political controverſy one is not to expect candour in every critic. Perhaps I ſhall be repreſented as diſpoſed to palliate the late rebellion, or to impute the blame of it, to either the executive, or ſuperintending branches of government. Nothing can be further from my intention. I do not mean to blame either the preſent, or the late, or any particular Parliament; neither do I impute any where a deficiency

ficiency of good deſigns and private virtues. The truth is, that the perſonal qualities of individuals are loſt in the irretrievable difficulty of political ſituation. In the actual circumſtances of our conſtitution, Ireland cannot, without exertions more than human, be effectually ſerved by her repreſentatives. Our Parliament, like the late Court of France, is the center of a ſyſtem that goads and irritates the people, and which never can ceaſe to draw down on Ireland a repetition of the diſaſters we have witneſſed. That ſyſtem branches too widely to be counteracted by beneficent intentions, however prevalent, in any of its members. Partial agency, or temporary efforts are inadequate to correct the general miſchief. It was not the fault of Lewis XVI. that his ſubjects were withdrawn from their allegiance. It was not the conſequence of acts of harſhneſs, proceeding from the monarch, or from thoſe who co-operated with him in the duties of legiſlation. Although not ſo actively benevolent, the intentions of Lewis XV. were not leſs upright than thoſe of his ſucceſſor. The game laws, the collection of the revenue, *the power of ſubaltern men*, the habitual contempt of the lower people, the defective conſtitution of *a noble caſt*, widely diffuſed through all the claſſes of life, and interfering with the pride and ambition, and with every other pretenſion of men, whoſe birth was not adorned by privileges,* all theſe concurring circumſtances of irritation had acted long and ſenſibly upon the people, and when the ſyren voice of reform ſounded in their ears, they liſtened to its promiſes and were ſeduced.

I can

* Where they were not thwarted, the rule of the French gentry was affectionate and gentle, but it was capricious and did not brook oppoſition.

I can account for the perverſion of the public mind both in France and Ireland; but I do not regard with leſs horror the outrages, to which it led; nor would I recommend in either caſe leſs activity in repelling the licentiouſneſs that aroſe from it. If the King of France had, on the firſt appearance of inſubordination, employed, like the Britiſh Monarch, his hitherto untainted force, he had acted well and wiſely for humanity. But indeed, he would have been unpardonable, if he had ſat down after his victory, to that very conſtitution, to which the refractory temper was, with juſtice, to be attributed. To the good fortune of ſubduing his miſguided ſubjects, our Sovereign adds the nobler enterpriſe of reclaiming them.† The riot of Paris, and that of London in 1780, ought to have been ſuppreſſed by the ſame meaſures; but the former ſhould have given occaſion to a ſerious train of reflections; which the latter, the moſt groundleſs perhaps and unprovoked of all popular riſings, did not in any reſpect call for. The cauſes that tend to produce diſorders and commotions in the ſtate, are matters for the conſideration of the ſtateſman, not of the magiſtrate. Let civil ſociety at all hazards be preſerved; but examine by what means civil ſociety came to be thus imminently in peril. Neither the views of the leaders in this late conſpiracy, nor the temper of thoſe who took the field, could have anſwered the purpoſe of improvement to this country. Their ſucceſs, dearly purchaſed by the miſeries of war, waged at our own doors, and between the tendereſt connexions, could have only added to our other calamities, the dominion of a people, who in many countries have taſted of power,

† This appears to be the object of Lord Cornwallis's miſſion to Ireland, and the exact character of his government.

power, and in all abuſed it; or, if fortune favored the inſurgents againſt their ally and their enemy, their climax of victorious hope would be the anarchy of an armed multitude. With them no terms were to be made; from them only deſolation was to be expected. What then?—Means inadmiſſible were employed. Is the improvement to be rejected, which is ſafe and practicable?

I muſt offer my proteſt againſt another miſconſtruction. Let not my objections to our mode of limiting the monarchy, be deemed an impeachment of the principle. We are not ſo ſituated, that it ſhould be neceſſary to decide between a government of will and caprice, and the rule of law and courſe of ſettled juſtice.* Political, is the bulwark of civil liberty. I have learned as much as any other perſon to reverence that form of ſociety, under which the ſiſter nation has riſen to unparalleled proſperity. I admire the ſyſtem through all its branches and inſtitutions; but if in the entire mechaniſm I were to ſelect that article, which appears moſt eſſential to the perfection of the whole, I ſhould point without heſitation to Parliament, and applaud the utility of that inſtitution, which, reviſing the exerciſe

* The gentleman, to whom this letter is addreſſed, imputed to my former publication, the confuſion of civil with political liberty. I apprehend that I am not guilty of that error; but I conſider the ſtate itſelf to exiſt merely for the good of the individuals who compoſe it. Political liberty, or the privileges of he ſtate, is conſequently inferior to civil freedom, or the advantages of the individuals. The former is the means, the latter is the end. The one is merely ſubſervient and auxiliary to the other. I adopt Mr. Hume's ſentiments on this ſubject, "We are to look upon all the vaſt apparatus of our Government, as having ultimately no other object or purpoſe but the diſtribution of juſtice; or in other words, the ſupport of the twelve Judges. Kings and parliaments, fleets and armies, Miniſters, and Privy Counſellors, are all in their end ſubſervient to the part of Adminiſtration"—Eſſay on Government.

exercise of authority, corrects its tendency to degenerate. My argument was directed against the superfluous extension of the principle of Parliamentary controul, and against an unprofitable and delusive imitation of British forms. When we pronounce this just eulogium on the British government, that it is calculated to provide for liberty,* and corresponds to its destination, we draw the line with accuracy, that discriminates it from our own. I am not indifferent to political freedom, nor inattentive to the means by which it is to be procured, or to the value of the enjoyment; but I must not therefore be expected to pursue my object through obstacles, to which a difference of circumstances has given rise, and which that difference renders insurmountable. Is he the enemy of liberty who says of France, that it is not free, or of Athens that it was not happy? There are few shades of dissimilitude between the constitutions of America and France, but there is a disparity in the habits of life, and in the division of property; need I tell you how unlike is the agency of either government upon its subjects? The very institutions, under which Rome flourished at one period, after a change of manners, proved her weakness, and the cause of her destruction. The civil privileges enjoyed under the British government are of universal application; but the British distribution of powers is not adapted to many

* A political writer of very and deservedly high reputation, has made an eulogium on the English constitution to which I so fully accede, that I am willing to yield the argument, if the description can be made to apply to the government of Ireland. "The British Government is the only one in the annals of mankind, which has aimed at diffusing liberty through a multitude of people, spread over a wide extent of territory."—Professor Millar's View of the English Government.

many countries; and ſtill contemplating the abſence of thoſe leading intereſts, which are deſtined in that ſyſtem, to be the protection of the people, I muſt claſs Ireland among the exceptions. Neither Wales nor Scotland appear to me to afford proper materials for a mixed monarchy, but both nations enjoy that advantage, engrafted on the capability of England. Ireland ſtands, at leaſt as much as the latter, in need of this aſſiſtance. You do not act in the ſpirit of enlightened attachment, but in a ridiculous and pedantic bigotry, when you chain yourſelf down to the forms of Britiſh liberty. You ought to propoſe for your object the ſocial happineſs, that theſe forms confer; and you ſhould purſue it by whatever means it is moſt eaſily attainable. The practice, as we have before obſerved, is wofully at variance with the theory of our government. When it is attempted to reconcile them by merely internal regulations, difficulties occur, which are not to be approached without the imminent hazard of anarchy; whilſt neither the ſtate is endangered, nor are its material inſtitutions, by incorporating the legiſlative councils of the empire; and by that meaſure the powers and influences would be cleared away, which affect the people unfavourably.* Let me add, that this circumſtance of diſtinct and independent authorities in the ſame ſtate, is anomalous in hiſtory. All other governments have tended to unity in legiſlation.

But this inaptitude of Britiſh inſtitutions to the Iriſh ſtate, paſſes generally unnoticed in our politi-

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* I mean diſtinctly to aſſert this propoſition, that an Union with Great Britain is calculated to produce the beneficial conſequences of a reform in Parliament, without throwing into the democracy of the country a weight or power, which the experience of the age convinces us, is not to be exerciſed without abuſe, or conferred without indiſcretion.

cal circles. It is there preſumed, that to make ample proviſion for liberty and happineſs, we have only to copy the code of England; whilſt to that degree do circumſtances vary, that in the exactneſs of the tranſcript we generally loſe the ſpirit of the original, and the wideſt diſparity is to be found in the effects of regulations, which to the incurious obſerver ſeem to correſpond moſt critically. For inſtance, the law which limited the duration of Parliament. Until the year 1768, every member of the Houſe of Commons held his ſeat for the term of his own life or for that of the King; it then was enacted that every eighth year a new Parliament ſhould be elected. There was no appearance of partiality upon the face of this meaſure; yet it was felt in ſome parts of the country as a ſcourge; in others it was a wholeſome regulation, in others again indifferent; juſt as county elections happened to be affected by it. Where the people generally were Proteſtants, (I ſpeak of that time when the Catholics were univerſally diſqualified from the franchiſe of electing) the repreſentatives were placed under a ſalutary controul. Where the number of Proteſtants, and conſequently of electors was ſmall, the nomination, pretty much as before, remained in the hands of ſome powerful family; but in many places the two leading denominations were nearly balanced; there all the intereſts of life, and all the principles of action were driven out of the courſe of their ordinary direction. It is not neceſſary to enter here into details on a grievance which has been remedied. One deſcription of citizens were on every eighth year, the diſpenſers of a favour which was earneſtly ſought after by the moſt conſiderable perſons of each diſtrict; another party were incompetent to confer that obligation; to which ſide would power, to which would conſi-

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deration naturally incline? This octeniallaw was general in its proviſions. There appeared no exception on the face of it. As Magna Charta was only intended for the Barons, and their free followers, ſo was this privilege deſigned to embrace a comparatively ſmall proportion: it brought to perfection that monſtrous conſtitution as Mr. Burke appoſitely denominates it, of a plebeian oligarchy, under which for above thirty years we exiſted: it was the occaſion, perhaps the cauſe of moſt ſubſequent diſorders; by enhancing the ſuperiority of a party, it promoted materially the popular diviſion and diſcontents. There can be no doubt, that if one ſet of citizens enjoy advantages over another, in proportion as they are leſs familiarly diſplayed, the preference will be leſs invidious.*

Again in the inſtance of the Place-bill, nothing can be conceived more fair, than to oblige a repreſentative, who has ſubmitted to the influence of the Crown, to return to his conſtituents for their approbation; but of your 300 repreſentatives, 194 ſit by private nomination, and family influence ſecures many more from the effects of popular cenſure. The ſole effect of this famous law, was to add an additional clauſe, to the bargain for a borough. So whilſt the independence, recognized in 1782, is exerciſed by an Houſe of Commons,

* The argument applies equally to the more important diſcuſſion now before the public. And not upon ſuch mean motive as private pique; but upon this reaſon of ſound policy, tha every diſtinction which is inevitable, ſhould be ſoftened as much as poſſible. One ſubmits the better to inconvenience, by not being reminded of it. One is really leſs incommoded by the ſuperiority of either a rival or a neighbour, when it is ſparingly exerciſed.

mons, ſlightly communicating with the country,* it muſt obviouſly be more the game of the repreſentatives, than of the repreſented.

Let me not be claſſed among the advocates of a very falſe ſentiment, that a popular delegation is neceſſary for the purpoſes of good Government. The Britiſh Parliament, although popular in a much greater degree than ours, would be an eminent exception. In the late conſtitution of the Dutch ſtates, there was not any thing popular, beſide that widely diffuſed proſperity which aroſe from it; but an ariſtocratic body, governing by popular forms, ſhould make up in public ſpirit for the unfavourable circumſtances of its origin. It ſhould cultivate the repreſentative character; at leaſt in ſentiment communicate with the people; direct or adopt the publick wiſhes; and diſcharging its duties, with a delicate ſenſibility to reputation, prove itſelf worthy to have been elected. The Britiſh Parliament forms an efficient control upon the executive magiſtrate; it even anſwers the purpoſe for which it is deſigned, better than a more popular and tumultuous delegation. In that aſſembly are collected, the principal perſons of the landed, monied, and

* The Iriſh Houſe of Commons conſiſts of 300 members, who are thus appointed:

32	Counties return	64
4	Open Cities	8
	The Univerſity	2
16	Cities and Boroughs, in which ſome particular family intereſt predominates, but which are not ſecure from change, return	32
97	Boroughs ſo cloſe as to be tranſferable property.	194
		300

There is a greater maſs of Iriſh property in the Engliſh Peerage, than in the attending members of the Houſe of Lords of Ireland.

and commercial intereſts; with a moderate intermixture of active, aſpiring men, who ſupport the weight, and animate the inveſtigation of public buſineſs. The proſperity of the greater number of individuals, who ſit in Parliament, is ſo intimately combined with the welfare of the ſtate, that they cannot more effectually promote the publick good, than by inclining the miniſter to adopt their own views. The patronage of the Crown, which in a poor ſtate is omnipotent, here loſes totally its effect; it is not ſufficient to compenſate to individuals, their private loſs in a public injury; they cannot of courſe, be blindfolded to the neglect or miſmanagement of miniſters. Whilſt you ſee in daily practice, the trifling accidents by which great property in land, in ſtock, or in commercial capital is materially affected, you will find abundant reaſon for relying on the active providence of a ſociety, in which theſe influences eminently predominate. Who ſo fit to ſuperintend the ſtate, as men who muſt ruin themſelves if they betray their country?

Contraſted to this organ of Government, in our parliamentary conſtitution, is an ariſtocracy of perſons in office, with fixed emoluments, whoſe intereſts do not fluctuate with the good or evil of the nation, who have no danger to apprehend, beſide a total overthrow of government, and from that cataſtrophe the ſtrength of the empire protects them. We have the name, not the utility, of the Britiſh ſyſtem. We have not the ſame reſources to carry it on with effect; the fabric is not ſupported in Ireland by thoſe pillars which inſure its ſolidity in the ſiſter country. The bulk of our landed intereſt is non-reſident; our monied and commercial intereſts are at beſt but thinly ſcattered, and are rendered yet more inefficient by religious incapacities. There is not a merchant

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in Parliament; ſcarcely a man who feels the fluctuations of the money market, and comparatively few of the conſiderable land-owners: the repreſentation of ſome capital towns, and of the counties, abſorbs whatever remains to us, from habitual abſence, of a proprietary body. The ſeats for boroughs are generally filled by gentlemen, who enter Parliament in purſuit of promotion, and who have few ſympathies with the public. Thus the ſecurity for a judicious inſpection of public affairs in the one country is *honor*, in the other a community of feelings between the governors and governed. The honor of our countrymen runs as high as that of any other perſons; but it is a capricious ſentiment, and the ſafety of millions deſerves a leſs vulnerable protection.

True, as I have already noticed, fortune is often worſhipped in the Britiſh Senate, but ſhe is not the ſole deity of the Temple. Fame too has her votaries, even among the moſt energetic, and leaſt affluent part of that auguſt body. The wide range of its diſcuſſions, and the elevated rank to which it has ariſen, give this impulſe to ambition; whilſt there is but one incentive here to mix in public affairs, the deſire of preferment; and upon thoſe who come under this attraction, the patronage of the crown can frequently act with great facility. The fault conſiſts in the exceſs. Men of mere enterpriſe in the Engliſh Houſe are few, and adopt the ſentiments of the greater number. They predominate in Ireland, and give to the whole a collective character of expectation. I ſuppoſe there is no gentleman in Parliament individually exceptionable. But every man of ſenſe, even thoſe of whom I ſpeak, will admit, that one hundred perſons may each be an eligible member, to mix in any council of ſtate, and ſtill a council compoſed exclusively, or even principally of thoſe hundred men, may be liable to ſtrong objections.

It will be replied that ſome controul upon the executive department is preferable to a total latitude of confidence. But is it propoſed that reſtraint and ſuperintendance on the part of the people, ſhould be aboliſhed? The incorporation of legiſlatures goes to a transfer, not a ſuppreſſion of juriſdiction. It ſubſtitutes an effective controul for one that is inefficient. If the number of repreſentatives is to be diminiſhed, the retrenchment muſt fall upon the moſt objectionable parts of the repreſentation. The leading men of the kingdom, whether by influence or election, will ſtill be placed in Parliament. As to the effect of the meaſure upon the conſequence of the country, and upon the protection and privileges of the inhabitants; the people will have more influence over one hundred gentlemen, generally elected for counties, and great towns, than over treble the number, moſt of whom owe no compliment to their quaſi conſtituents. And that number of members in the imperial Houſe of Commons, joined to the ſeveral branches of the Iriſh intereſt, who already act upon the Britiſh Government, will confer on Ireland greater conſideration, than ſhe can derive from a domeſtic Parliament, thus deficiently organized, which neither proceeds from the people, nor returns to them; which neither leads the public mind by the influence it enjoys, nor by the confidence it has acquired.

Perhaps, you imagine, that this difficulty of procuring an adequate repreſentation may be placed among the inconveniencies that time may rectify. Quite the reverſe; time has hitherto enhanced the diſproportion between the property of thoſe, who interfere in the ſupreme diſpoſal of public concerns, and that of the nation whom they regulate. And the ſame cauſes cannot ceaſe to produce the ſame conſequences. When a man of fortune procures,

cures a peerage, he ceaſes in general to have any object to cultivate in this kingdom, and lapſes from active purſuit to indolent enjoyment. His family, at leaſt, ſpeedily relinquiſh the care of politics, and become abſentees; the landed intereſt in the Houſe of Commons has conſiderably declined ſince the year 1776, when the crown became liberal of Iriſh peerages. A great part of the wealth, recently acquired, or improved, by which this perpetual drain ought to be ſupplied, is in the hands of Catholics, and theſe perſons are alſo directed to other purſuits, by the nature of our conſtitution.

I conclude this head with a poſition which cannot be put too often, or too ſtrongly. If the country does not afford materials for a proper controul over the executive department, ſome other proviſion ought to be made for the public welfare. The privilege of ſuperintendance cannot by its nature be indifferent, but muſt directly lead to good or evil. It ſhould not be permitted to deviate from public to private purpoſes; and if the ſituation of ſupreme influence in the ſtate be inaccurately filled, ſuch miſapplication is inevitable. Jobbing and manœuvres will diſgrace the Iriſh government, whilſt it is obliged to act through the medium of perſons, who do not diſdain the practice. A man of fortune in the Houſe of Commons is a figure of ſo much magnitude, that Adminiſtration cannot well reſiſt him in any thing he takes in head. Even a man of leſſer rank is too uſeful not to be gratified. The Miniſter ſways the Britiſh Houſe of Commons, but on extremely different principles: he cultivates the favour of that body, by not preſſing any meaſure againſt the ſenſe of the majority; or of the intereſts, which that majority are bound to cultivate. When he ventures upon other conduct,

they withdraw their confidence, and his power terminates. Lord North and Mr. Fox poſſeſſed the means which Mr. Pitt enjoys, of procuring a majority by influence, to ratify the meaſures of their reſpective adminiſtrations. Sir Robert Walpole is ſaid to have retained his place againſt the perſonal inclination of his Sovereign. What is the caſe at this hour? Does Mr. Pitt hold the reigns of government by the weight of his diſtributions? Has he corrupted the people of England? Parliament is but the echo of their aſſenting voice, which confirms him in the adminiſtration of his country.

When I publiſhed the pamphlet you were pleaſed to notice, I had in contemplation a more important queſtion, than any, that affected the being of Parliament alone. I looked to the people, for whom Parliaments exiſt. The views of government, and the circumſtances of the country ſeemed to have conducted us to the eve of a great change of ſyſtem; and the relation to the ſtate, of a moſt comprehenſive deſcription of its citizens, appeared to be weighed very lightly. Ungracious as the ſound is to ſome ears, I cannot, in diſcourſing of the ſtate of Ireland, decline the concern of one of its moſt important branches. I have not prepared the political chart of the country; as it lies open before me, I am bound to follow it. Be aſſured that the Catholics of this kingdom are perfectly aware of the inconvenience of their ſituation. They ſee, they touch the impervious line that is drawn between them and the other deſcriptions of their fellow ſubjects. The feeling is not leſs poignant, whether I or any other individual, who engages in a political controverſy, be ſilent on the ſubject, or loquacious. I talk of ſentiments, with which no man is more converſant. In an arrangement, which ought to be complete,

plete, as it was designed to be final, every murmur ſhould be collected, every complaint be fairly heard, and judiciouſly inveſtigated. Idle expectation, that the perception of inconvenience was to be blunted by neglect of its objects; as ſome animals imagine danger to be at an end when they have ſhut their eyes on the purſuer. I introduced the Catholics, not as you, and others leſs reſpectable, ſtrangely repreſented, in the capacity of a partiſan; but as a lover of the empire, and as an Iriſhman. I ſeek in an Union for the tranquillity of Ireland, the increaſed ſtrength of Britain, the more vigorous protection of the world; but if the ſettlement were to be formed on a defective baſis, theſe glorious ends would ſtill remain unaccompliſhed; indeed ſomething worſe; for the meaſure of an Union, between theſe countries, does not admit of intermediate conſequences; it muſt be to both, the extreme of good, or the extreme of miſchief; and the previous diſpoſition which is created on either ſide, by liberality of conditions, by wholeſome laws, and by the contentment of the people, muſt determine the alternative. Should we conceive ourſelves at eaſe, becauſe diſcontent ſlumbers amidſt unextinguiſhed embers? Such is not a bulwark, on which the power and glory of Britain can ſecurely reſt. Such is not a benign opening of repoſe to Ireland. With theſe views, and with theſe feelings, I endeavoured to draw into notice, by ſuch means as I was competent to employ, that cardinal queſtion of Iriſh politics, the privileges of the Catholics. As a neceſſary preliminary, I applied myſelf to refute certain notions which were circulated among the indiſpoſed to that people; and to reprehend certain inſtitutions, which were conſidered to be unkindly directed

againſt them.* The moment was critical and called for the diſcuſſion. If the government was to be new-modelled, it would be right to adopt ſuch regulations as ſhould ſilence every whiſper of general grievance; if the propoſed change did not take effect, ſtill the abolition of the incapacities I complained of, would render our ſtate of ſociety more tolerable. Having formed an opinion on the ſubject of uniting the two legiſlatures of the empire, I did not heſitate to expreſs it; but as it was not my primary object, nor the matter of which I propoſed to treat, I did not find it incumbent to detail the ſeries of reaſoning that led to my concluſion; the point came incidentally in my way, and I expreſſed what occurred to me. Subſequent reflection has confirmed my opinion, as to the general concern of the country in this queſtion; and it has impreſſed the matter upon my mind, even more forcibly than when firſt it was propounded, as the genuine relief and exoneration of that great body, who, under the appellation of Catholics, are doomed by our preſent ſyſtem to collective and individual inferiority: I have not, of courſe, occaſion to retract any of my leading aſſertions; I muſt ſtill maintain, that by incorporating our parliament with that of Britain, we have equal ſecurity for the liberty of the ſubject, and a much fairer proſpect of a ſound and ſteady

* Such as the Orange Societies, of which I muſt perſevere in inſiſting, that they tend to perpetuate the diviſion of the people, and to counteract, by a combination, the beneficial effects of the repeal of the Popery Laws. The queſtion at preſent before us, is of too much magnitude to admit a detail of theſe ſubaltern follies; yet I muſt ſay that when people obſerve ſuch a combination, and are enabled to collect its temper from the publications that ſeem to pleaſe it, abſurd and ſilly as theſe publications may intrinſically be, it is an inducement to ſtrengthen Government, as a protection againſt them.

ſteady adminiſtration: that the kind or degree of independence, which fate and circumſtances ſeem to have allotted to this iſland, does not ſo ſupport the external dignity of Ireland, as to become a legitimate object of pride; and, as it operates internally, that it is, what I have already termed it, "a great domeſtic cauſe * of irritation." I know not whether the preſent be the proper time and temper for the diſcuſſion of the ſubject. The care and ſelection of ſuch circumſtances belong to perſons in an elevated place of public function. I treat abſtractedly and in general, of a judicious change of conſtitution, and my private opinion is not to be affected by collateral conſiderations.

Perhaps it is true, that I recommend my doctrine by its negative merits; or, as you call it, by "a ſhort catalogue of evils to be removed, without any perſuaſive obſervations, grounded on advantages to be conferred ‡." Your objection indeed is whimſical; ſhall not a man pull a thorn from his own ſide without a recompence? Muſt we, Iriſhmen, be induced by ſugar plumbs to do what is good for us? I do not diſtinctly comprehend the difference between the removal of evil and an advantage. If you mean that I have not entered into comprehenſive details on the head of Commerce, I muſt candidly ſay, that I think this queſtion is to be decided upon conſiderations of an higher nature. If our conſtitution be ſound, and if the operation of it be beneficial, I would not be reaſoned out of it by cold calculations of ſhipping and tonnage; I would not be induced by all the wool and cotton, and all the tea and ſugar in the world, to forſake it. If its defects militate

* Memoire, page 1.

‡ See Letter, by Mr. Hamilton.

militate againſt human happineſs, I want no other impulſe to deſire its correction. No doubt, ſhould a treaty of union proceed, there will be found a proper ſeaſon for commercial regulations, and the concern will be important; but the ſettlement of the country ſtands uppermoſt in my mind; proſperity and affluence come of courſe when your ſtate is well regulated. The extinction of our feuds would be of itſelf a fortune to Ireland; to pacify them ſhould be the beginning, the end, and the object of all our endeavours. I can diſcuſs no queſtion but the means of drawing the people into amity with each other, and with the government; and of rooting out, on either hand, the ſeeds of jealouſy. Your conſtitution may be as brilliant as theory can make it; unleſs you can procure this temper, it is a ſplendid deception; and the utmoſt range of commercial opportunities is nugatory.

But this ſhort catalogue of evils, of which you appear to make ſo light account, comprizes whatever has kept the people of Ireland at variance with its government: The factions of the high; the diſcontents of the low; poverty and turbulence, each as in a circle promoting the other, and the inaccurate application of authority the cauſe of both. It comprizes the monopoly of political power and patronage in a few hands, and the means that were employed to fortify that monopoly. A principal engine was the diviſion of the nation into diſtinct caſts, by the contrivance for each, of a totally different code of laws and of immunities. The force of this ſyſtem is weakened; but the hoſtile diſpoſitions, that were formed under it are preſerved, with more heat perhaps, and pertinacity and addreſs, becauſe the parties who relied upon this as a bulwark, perceived the ſecurity begin to fail them.

I concluded

I concluded that Parliament was not qualified to remedy the diſorders of the ſtate, becauſe the root of the miſchief lies in the conſtitution of our Houſe of Commons, and in the oppoſition of particular to national intereſts, which is not any where ſo predominant, as within the circle of Parliament itſelf. I feel that it is incumbent on me to enforce my opinion, by a detailed explanation of the reaſoning that produced it. I have endeavoured to clear the ground for the admiſſion of argument, by ſubſtantiating what every Iriſhman ought clearly to feel before he aſſents to an incorporation of Legiſlatures, that the meaſure does not involve the ſettled dignity of his country. I have alſo endeavoured to ſubſtantiate, that our preſent form of conſtitution has not acted kindly or beneficially for the ſubjects. It was not formed upon a ſcheme of general concern for the entire people, and of courſe it only promoted excluſive advantages. I ſhall proceed with my analiſis, having, as I hope, aſcertained the point of honor, and made ſome progreſs in the conſideration of expediency.

Let me firſt complete the outline of what I conceive to be the intereſt of the Catholics in the preſent queſtion. This alſo is no unimportant preliminary. The ſituation of that part of the people may be thus deſcribed: A ſlender ariſtocracy, an extenſive middle order, an immenſe claſs of labouring and induſtrious. Obviouſly it is more eſſential to a people thus circumſtanced, to be placed under the protection of a ſtrong government, than to be admitted to a participation of power in a feeble ſtate, from any efficient ſhare in which their ſituation muſt generally exclude them.

There is not the leaſt probability that the factions of Proteſtant and Catholic will ſubſide under

der our preſent conſtitution*. Admitting them to ſubſiſt, this alternative remains for conſideration, whether would few or many of the latter be introduced into Parliament by an emancipation? In the former caſe, theſe few would obtain the uſual parliamentary conſideration; they would act like other men in the ſame place, and there the matter would end without any alteration in the general management of the country. If many got acceſs to Parliament, they would form a Catholic oppoſed to a Proteſtant faction, preciſely as in the laſt century, when the parties ran at length into civil wars, in which one was reduced to a pitiable ſubjugation.

The grievance which moſt materially affects the Catholics is a diſpoſition, ungraciouſly and for unkind purpoſes, to diſcriminate them from their fellow-ſubjects. A compariſon of the effects of the reſpective meaſures of union or emancipation upon this temper, ſhould form the ground of their deciſion. They are excluded by law from certain high poſts and from Parliament. If the incapacities by ſtatute were removed, there would ſtill remain a natural diſability in their general inferiority of rank, ſo that in a great degree they could not profit of the conceſſion. When the teſt laws are abrogated, little more is done than an act of juſtice to certain individuals, and the abolition of a ſtigma which produces diſcontent, by offending the feelings of a large portion of the people. Theſe, to be ſure, are moſt meritorious conſiderations; but they do not go to the extent of the inconvenience; no reſtraint is thereby placed upon

* There is not a line in this argument which does not apply equally to the Diſſenters, and indeed to all deſcriptions of perſons who are without the pale of the Oligarchy.

on the untoward diſpoſition I have mentioned, The remedy is, of courſe, not ſo ſubſtantial as this other, which makes the Government ſtrong againſt that temper, and which removes the motives and powers that ſupport it. On the moſt favourable calculation, not above twelve could procure themſelves to be returned to Parliament, ſix ſuppoſe by purchaſe, and as many upon the landed intereſt and that of open towns. The occaſional elevation of a dozen men, is not to be compared in point of national advantage to a meaſure, which either equalizes all parties, or at leaſt reduces them to a ſtate of reciprocal inoffenſiveneſs. The Britiſh government protects the Catholics of France, Portugal and Italy, and if it were not under ſome impediment, why ſhould it not equally protect its own ſubjects of Ireland?

Of two Parliaments, neither of which they can materially influence, it is more the intereſt of the Catholics to live under the juriſdiction of that, which has not been educated with any indiſpoſition to them. Now the majority of the Iriſh Parliament has upon all, or moſt occaſions, diſplayed ſtrong marks of rooted diſinclination to that people. Nay it is a faſhion with many perſons of high conſideration here, to diſlike a man for being a Catholic This is certainly not the caſe in England. Proteſtant and Catholic, not having been known there, as political parties, for above a century, the diſtinction became obſolete. The liberal and continued intercourſe of the faſhionable, the diplomatic, and the commercial claſſes, with Catholic countries, contributed alſo to obliterate the prejudices, which formerly aroſe from the difference of religion. Except through the interpoſition of the Crown, which is the Britiſh branch of our Government, the Iriſh Legiſlature has never been diſtinguiſhed for condeſcenſion to its Catholic ſubjects. Beſides, the property of the individuals,

individuals, who compoſe the Britiſh Parliament is ſo extenſive, and ſo much connected with the ſafety of the ſtate, that they never will hazard to excite diſcontents, upon motives of a petty and capricious diſapprobation. I am therefore indifferent to the declarations which any man, or any miniſter may make. I know the Britiſh Government is conducted upon principles of reaſon, and I can calculate how far reaſon will go. From this light only one may with confidence pronounce, that the Catholics will, on the Union eſtabliſhment, obtain a total eligibility; and, what is more material to them, that until they do obtain it, they will have an exemption from vexatious jealouſies, and the practical enjoyment of the privileges, which have already been conceded to them. It may equally be predicted, that in a collective capacity, the Catholic body will not be advanced to be a dominant party either in Church or State, becauſe whilſt the balance of property inclines againſt them, it would neither be neceſſary, politic, nor deſireable.

It may be right to explain, wherefore the Catholics cannot materially influence the Parliament, although they conſtitute a majority of the population. They are excluded from the boroughs by the Conſtitution of them; and from the freedom of cities by the jealouſy of the magiſtrates.* You will perhaps

* The Catholics who are often freeholders, but ſeldom freemen, will have their due influence over the government, when the repreſentation is confined to counties, and counties of cities. And conſidering how the members of that body are generally circumſtanced, no event can be more favourable for them, than that the general importance of the order of freeholders ſhould be augmented. To that order the Catholics belong, and there lies the entire force of their political influence. Now the influence of that claſs will encreaſe in proportion as the boroughs are diminiſhed, and that the number of perſons becomes more ſmall who can get into Parliament, independent of the choice of freeholders.

haps aſk of me, wherefore we were anxious to procure this franchiſe of ſuffrage, of which the operation is ſo much reſtricted. Becauſe though we cannot have great influence, it does not follow that we ſhould have none at all. Becauſe although a Catholic intereſt is not any where ſuperior, yet the individuals of that communion ought to have the full benefit of their reſpective ſituations. A Catholic tenantry will vote with their Proteſtant landlord; but is it indifferent to them, that they, as well as their neighbours, are competent to confer that compliment?

The influence of the Catholics prevails principally in civil life: there indeed it is immenſe. Compoſing very much the trading and induſtrious portions of the community, they are concerned in the greater part of tranſactions through the kingdom. The bar, wholeſale merchants, attornies, perſons engaged in money dealings, will always cultivate the favor of this part of the people. Now the relative importance of theſe deſcriptions will generally riſe in conſequen c of an Union, and thoſe, who will relatively de cline, are the perſons moſt independent of theſe influences. The Proteſtant Prelacy * of Ireland have generally declared, that in the event of an Union, they could no longer imagine the intereſt of the eſtabliſhment entruſted to their care, to be in any wiſe endangered, by the moſt liberal indulgence to the ſubordinate communions. Is this ſentiment no recommendation to perſons who wiſh to enjoy in peace the advantages of their country?

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* The clergy of all deſcriptions appear to favour the project of an Incorporating Union, and really this coincidence of perſons, who do not concur in any thing elſe, muſt appear a powerful recommendation.

The moſt ingenious arguments againſt admitting the Catholics to political franchiſes, are to be found in the ſpeech of Mr. Foſter, (the Speaker) in 1793: they follow very cloſely the reaſoning of Lord Bolingbroke, againſt a Catholic Prince, in his letter to Sir William Windham. But the analogy completely fails; for as the prince is made for the people, it is juſtifiable to impoſe on him a condition of conforming to their convenience; but it is abſurd to talk of making ſuch terms with the people, for whoſe accommodation and advantage the ſtate exiſts and was created. If you prove that a particular franchiſe cannot with propriety be entruſted to thoſe inhabitants at large, who are obviouſly within its purview, the concluſion, in my mind is, to remove the matter of contention altogether; I ſhould not think of forming a monopoly in favor of the few who chuſe to appreciate highly their own fitneſs for the enjoyment.

Embelliſh it by whatever ſplendid names you pleaſe, the government of Ireland is an oligarchy. In the popular member of our conſtitution, the weight of certain individuals is immenſe, and that of the people is inconſiderable. This bears materially upon the Adminiſtration; for neither are the miniſters of the Crown acted upon in any eminent degree by the influence of the people; nor have theſe the benefit of that impartiality among his ſubjects, which muſt be the natural feeling of every monarch. There is a controul indeed over the royal authority; but as it is almoſt completely ſevered from the public intereſt, it is neceſſarily directed in its exerciſe by the private views, or at beſt by the perſonal character of the individuals, who compoſe

poſe it.* A compromiſe is made, ſuch as can only conſiſt with a very irregular government, and which if it were not the reſult of diſorders in the ſtate, muſt eventually introduce them. The patronage and internal management of the country is given up to thoſe who have power to do, what uſually is called the King's buſineſs; that is, to raiſe the ſupplies, to preſerve the Britiſh intereſt and an uniformity between the two governments.

The conſiderable members of the oligarchy are, by the nature of their ſituation, rendered apprehenſive of a popular ſpirit, and adverſe to the body of the people: it cannot be otherwiſe. When power is not bottomed upon hereditary prepoſſeſſion, popular favour, or the influence of property—the perſons, who hold it, muſt be ſenſible that it is inſecure, and that it is invidious.—They will ſeek to turn the popular mind from public to private conſiderations. Men who have ſuch urgent motives to promote competition, will faſten with avidity upon any tendency to that temper. They will meet in their adherents, the greateſt promptitude to ſecond them in widening the breach; for a rivalſhip in emolument is as much apprehended by them, as a diminution of power by their ſuperiors. The excluſive ſpirit which they ſeek pretences of miſtruſt and jealouſy to authoriſe, confirms their own excluſive title to preferment.† I have

* The only thing which the King cannot do in Ireland is to confer favour upon a certain deſcription of his ſubjects, and that deſcription by far the moſt numerous. What an outcry, what an oppoſition, when any kindneſs is intended to them! So that the Crown is here free in its power, but circumſcribed in its benignity—the very reverſe of what is deſigned by a popular controul on the Executive.

† Among the Proteſtants who are removed from theſe inducements, and the Catholics of the ſame rank, there has long appeared a tendency to an oblivion of their ancient differences; but the jealouſies of the former have been revived at different times artificially. From

I have deſcribed the courſe of feelings, which like circumſtances will produce in every country; but

From the memorable meeting at Dungannon, to about 1785, this diſpoſition to harmony was very prevalent. The two deſcriptions diſplayed equal zeal to reſiſt the invaſion we were then threatened with, and ſhared together the Volunteer ſervice. About this latter period the peaſantry of Munſter, fell into commmotions on the old ground of tithes: publications immediately iſſued from the preſs, ſtuffed with aſperſions on the religion and moral character of the Catholics; repreſenting them as a refractory, perfidious people, who were to be kept at the point of the ſword from you. The expedient ſucceeded. The paſſions of the people were ſet in motion, and the incipient harmony was broken up effectually. Another incident occurred lately. (I put out of the way the diſpoſition, the very prevalent anxiety to inſinuate that every Catholic was a rebel, and to confound uneaſineſs under the Popery laws, with hoſtility to the conſtitution.)

Doctor Caulfield, the Catholic Biſhop of Ferns, had the misfortune to live in a county which was the ſcene of the late outrages. He, with thoſe of his clergy whom he could collect about him, exerted all that influence, which in better times their function, and perſonal virtue had acquired, to reſiſt the exceſſes of an armed mob, and at the imminent peril of their lives, reſcued many from maſſacre. This was the conduct of chriſtian clergymen; but it was a conduct, for which chriſtian clergymen deſerve every applauſe that can be beſtowed upon a ſublime diſcharge of duty; yet there are perſons ſo much mortified to perceive, that Roman Catholic eccleſiaſtics have acted nobly, that books and paragraphs have been circulated, in order, by blackening the motives of theſe gentlemen, and detracting from their merit, to prevent this amiable and heroic conduct from making a ſuitable impreſſion on the minds of their fellow citizens.

There are many perſons now alive, who recollect, when it was very uſual to terrify the Proteſtants by reports of ſham plots, and even days were named, when the Catholics, it was aſſerted, were to riſe and maſſacre them. Theſe artifices have fallen into diſuſe, ſince the affairs of this country came to be more cloſely looked after by the Britiſh Adminiſtration; and ſince the Government by Lords Juſtices was diſcontinued. Lord Townſhend was the firſt Viceroy who permanently reſided, and in his attempts to break the ariſtocracy, he found it expedient to beſtow ſome little countenance on the ſubordinate religion.

but doubtleſs, the ſtate of Ireland, ruſhes upon your mind as it does on mine, and forms a ſtriking illuſtration. The perſons moſt diſtinguiſhed, by political, and almoſt by perſonal diſinclination to that material branch of the people, the Catholics, are to be found among the parliamentary intereſts; thoſe who endeavour principally to make Popery a bugbear, are men in office under corporations, and ſubordinately under government. I have no idea that any particular diſapprobation of religious tenets enters into this hoſtility. The term of diviſion is convenient; but if any other equally anſwered the deſign, it would equally be made uſe of. You may talk, and I am ſure you believe it, of advances to conciliate. The miniſters of the Crown perceived the wretched policy under which this country languiſhed, and they procured laws to be enacted favourable to the Catholics.* Many liberal and enlightened Proteſtants did cordially adopt the change. But, of that party, all thoſe who by the coarſeneſs of their habits, or of their underſtanding, may be ſaid to conſtitute the vulgar, obſerved with great ſpleen the advancement of men to the order of fellow citizens, whom they had been accuſtomed to regard as ſubordinate; and their jealouſy was countenanced by a large portion of the powerful. The novelty of their ſituation, the warmth of controverſy, but above all the unneighbourly temper that broke out, whilſt the repeal of the popery laws was agitated, did betray many

* In 1778 the firſt relaxation of the Popery laws took place, and ſo much was the merit of this meaſure to be attributed to the royal interpoſition, that when in the beginning of the ſeſſion, a bill, far leſs extenſive, was propoſed, it was contemptuouſly rejected. On the firſt attempt the Houſe was left to itſelf.

many of the Catholics into political indiſcretion.† On the whole, what you conſider advances to conciliate, were accompanied by circumſtances which appear to me to have rather repelled each people from the other. The texture that legiſlation attempted to weave, manners unravelled as aſſiduouſly. There are families in Ireland, who, having acted for generations upon this crooked policy of diſunion, have at length loſt the clue to their conduct, and candidly conceive that whilſt inflamed by paſſion they purſue their intereſt, they are cultivating a ſober and judicious principle. Tradition, education, intercourſe have contributed, ſo entirely to work into the frame of their minds, the anti-popular prepoſſeſſion, that in the modern manifeſtations of zeal for Proteſtantiſm, as a political not a religious deſignation, there is infinitely leſs of predetermination than of character.

To a body thus conſtituted, the crown muſt under our preſent forms reſort, in order to carry on the government without obſtruction; and its conſent muſt be procured by the terms I have ſpecified.

† I allude here to acts of alienation, not from the ſtate, but from the individuals in authority. As to the rebellion, I conceive the remote operation of the popery laws to have conduced to it, by throwing too much power into the hands of private gentlemen, by preventing the diffuſion of property, and ſo creating a lawleſs character in the common people; but certainly it had nothing in it of political pretenſions of the one party againſt the other. If the rebellion had not been ſuppreſſed, there is no doubt it muſt have proved fatal to religion in general. The people here, preciſely as in France, were fanaticiſed by Deiſts. If they had proceeded much farther, they would have been induced, as they were in France, to leave their Paſtors in a minority of timid devotees and women, and the former pretenſions of that clergy to popularity, would have occaſioned to them a very bitter perſecution. I ſay with confidence that the ſentiments I here expreſs, were, pending and previous to the late commotions, entertained by the heads of the Catholic clergy in this kingdom.

fied. Now can you for an inſtant argue that this is a ſuitable organ for the management of the moſt divided people on the earth, and of the moſt jarring intereſts? Itſelf a principal in the diſpute, itſelf the ſoul and prime mover of the conflict. Let the Crown be relieved from this neceſſity, encouragement and protection will be diſpenſed according to the feelings and intereſt of the Sovereign; that is, in other words, they will be diſpenſed indiſcriminately; for the ſituation of a Prince places him above the views and quarrels which paſs from private into public life; he cannot be ſenſible to any other diviſion of his people, than of thoſe who are, or who are not refractory to his government; thoſe who make his dominions flouriſh, or thoſe who neglect them. Here are my premiſes: Ireland ſtands eminently in need of an impartial Adminiſtration; prediſpoſed to diſunion and unſocial humours, by religious difference, it requires a vigorous, a ſteady, and an even-handed government to reſtrain or counteract the unhappy propenſity. Can you deny my concluſion, that it is not ſo conſonant to the welfare of the country, to be governed by perſons, who are themſelves engaged in the diſtracting factions, as by a power that nature and ſituation render indifferent, and which in addition, preſents an equal aſſurance for our civil liberties? If with you, I attributed to accident, any part of the temper which we all deplore, I ſhould be diſpoſed with you to expect the remedy from time and patience. The hiſtory of Europe for a few years back, that rich harveſt of experience, has inſtructed me not to admire the ſhort cut to political improvement. But it is here I beg leave particularly to remind you, that the ſource of our country's misfortunes ſeems to lie deeper than you conclude from your examination.—They muſt

be traced to influences and intereſts, ariſing from the organization of our conſtitution, and which contain a renovating principle of diſcord, calculated to endure to the utmoſt term of its exiſtence; where there is partiality in the exerciſe, or diſtribution of power, he who is called on to obey, will to the end of time perform his duty with reluctance. Where there is even the appearance or ſuſpicion of partiality, the ſubject will not be cordial. I do not accuſe our parliamentary leaders of any conduct that is rare, extraordinary, or unprecedented. Power is grateful, and few who have a ſituation to preſerve, are philoſophically ſcrupulous in employing the means, which are moſt eaſy and effectual for their purpoſe. The foible is of human nature, and for that very reaſon to human nature I would apply myſelf, and endeavour to counteract the general infirmity, by principles of equally extenſive operation. The heads of the nation are ſubjected to certain influences and intereſts; let the miſguiding motives be removed, and the conduct of thoſe whom they affect will receive a new direction, and through the land new ſprings of action will be generally communicated. This is not a narrow or a palliative policy, but broad and fundamental, ſuch as the exigency demands; and in analogy to the means, by which, when the heart is ſound, you ſeek to reclaim your friend, to rectify the faults of habit, and the errors either of his education or his judgment. Reform the Iriſh Houſe of Commons, and you have a democracy; the conſequence is unavoidable, if the alteration be on any very capacious ſcale; and if it be not, the oligarchy is merely ſhifted into other hands, without any acceſſion to the popular intereſt from the transfer. Repeal the diſtinguiſhing laws; good; but you cannot by your act of Parliament reach the ſpirit of diſtinction. The tenden-

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cy to diſunion will ſubſiſt, with all the irritating circumſtances that accompany that temper, ſo long as theſe intereſts are preſerved, which give to perſons of the very firſt influence in the land, a powerful inducement to encourage it. And they never will want a pretence; for whilſt the lower people are wretched, they will be turbulent; and the name of a common religion will furniſh the ground of jealous accuſation againſt the Catholics of more improved condition. Intereſted men will circulate the charge, and ſelfiſhneſs and credulity will combine to ſupply believers. Political parties will attach themſelves as it may ſuit their purpoſe, either to the ſide of thoſe who are unwilling to acknowledge a ſuperior, or of theſe, who, with leſs appearance of propriety, refuſe to admit an equal. It may be very deſireable for party leaders to place themſelves at the head of the Catholics, but that body can never, to any material extent, be more than the footſtool of factions; a ſituation I ſhould apprehend, neither enviable nor advantageous, and from which, he is their friend, who deſires to reſcue them: they are moſt generally dependant, are moſt expoſed to the abuſe of power, and ſtand moſt in need of protection. What, although amidſt ſcrambles for authority, ſome of that body might get within the precincts of the oligarchy. Catholic, or peaſant, or by whatever name you pleaſe to call them, the people would not, therefore, be exonerated from the heavy hand of power. Perhaps you will tell me that this propenſity to diviſion, is the inherent vice of free conſtitutions. True it is ſo; we are not therefore to encreaſe the cauſes of difference, in number and malignity. Without this inconvenience, we can have the ſecure enjoyment of civil liberty, under the ſanction and ſuperintendance of a popular aſſembly, with the advantage of repreſentation, in my opinion, to an adequate extent;

tent; but beyond queſtion, in a more ample* degree, than at preſent we enjoy it. In common life, a man would be warned by habitual infirmity, to avoid the occaſion of his misfortunes. And ſhall not Ireland, to whom feuds and ſtrifes have coſt ſo dear, prefer that form of free government, which is beſt protected againſt the recurrence of the very diſaſters we complain of? It was on this view of the ſubject, and upon this reaſoning I grounded my aſſertion, that the neceſſities of Ireland called for a "a great change of manners, to be founded on a great change of Conſtitution."

Sir, the evil of reſtrictive laws upon the people, has been loſt in the magnitude of their conſequences. The ſtatutes of Queen Anne formed the nucleus of a ſyſtem of abuſes. Not the primitive miſchief alone, but all its incidents are to be rectified. All the bearings, and relations of authority are to be varied: civil ſociety itſelf is to be new-modelled. Where is the power, where the perſeverance, where the virtue, to undertake that taſk?—to proſecute with vigour and diſcharge the duty with fidelity? Are we to await in pious expectation, that the country may be regenerated by the play of factions, where factions are proverbially corrupt? or retrieved by the energetic virtue of ſome chief governor, whilſt notoriouſly the moſt feeble thing on earth, againſt local cabals, is the government of Ireland? How many of theſe cabals would ſtart up to obſtruct a project, by the ſucceſs of which nearly all of them would be offended? No; let the cabals be firſt put out of the way, and then the ſtupendous labour of improvement may be attempted. When the borough intereſt ſhall be reduced and fixed in England, its influence will be altered materially as to the empire, but

* See page 55.

but almoſt totally as to Ireland. It will no longer feel the neceſſity of leaning for ſupport on party ſpirit; and if any perſons ſtill retain a hankering for that ſtale expedient, the Crown, relieved from its actual ſtate of dependance, would be fully competent to controul them. I ſmile to hear people tell, what prodigies were to be effected by particular adminiſtrations: we ſhould have a Viceroy in each pariſh to carry into effect any extenſive ſcheme of benevolence. General benefit and impartial kindneſs to all the people is contrary to the nature of our preſent arrangement. A Chief Governor may extend the practice, juſt ſo far as his eye and his activity can reach and for juſt ſo long a term, as the duration of his authority. Let his vigilance relax for an hour, or let a ſucceſſor come, with different views or inferior energy,—chaos returns again; every thing relapſes to ſuſpicion and ſeverity. Lord Cornwallis brought with him to the government of Ireland greater perſonal advantages, than perhaps any nobleman poſſeſſed, ſince the Duke of Ormond filled that ſituation. What obſtructions has he encountered? How comparatively little has he been able to effect? How unavailing will all his efforts prove, if retiring from the helm, he ſhall leave the ſyſtem as he found it? What were the virtues of Trajan to the Roman world? They paſſed without conſequence or impreſſion, beyond the day on which they were diſplayed: As the beam that ſhoots acroſs a dull horizon, for an inſtant it ſeems to chear, and the general gloom envelopes it.

Arguing politically, I know nothing of implicit confidences. I propoſe to truſt to the Crown, becauſe the intereſts of the Prince concur ſo exactly with thoſe of the people; and, as little inclined to general ſuſpicion, I inculcate diffidence

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of the native powers in that point only, where I ſee them repelled from the general good by the law, the omnipotent law of ſelf-aggrandizement, and merely to the extent of that repulſion. Does my credulous faith embrace the honor of Britain? It does preciſely, under the guidance of the ſame rule, and to the ſame latitude. The Britiſh Government is conducted upon principles which do not leave room to ſuppoſe, that it would be unjuſt gratuitouſly, and to its own detriment. There do I fix my mind, where I ſee poſitive regulation, ſupported by obvious intereſt. Our empire depends for its exiſtence in the European ſyſtem, on the reſources of its ſubjects. Compared with the powers to whom it is oppoſed, its population is ſmall, its range of territory diminutive. As ſhe is obliged to adopt a naval method of defence, England could not, if ſhe were inclined, act in that ſpirit of ſummary deſpotiſm, which we ſee practiſed on the Continent. Conſtraint may collect an army; plunder may ſubſiſt and clothe it; a fleet muſt be equipped by money; and that revenue, which is indiſpenſable to a maritime ſtate, can only be drawn from a people in opulence. Now if the ſubjects of Ireland were rich, and that a wayward Parliament dealt out the public treaſure with a parſimonious hand, I might ſuppoſe the Miniſter was anxious to be relieved from the reſtriction. When I find, that a poor ſtate is taxed profuſely; taxed to the full amount of what is at any time demanded, I muſt endeavour to aſſign a motive more intelligible. Adminiſtration hopes to make Ireland contribute to the general exigence. Granted; but does it therefore mean to wring from poverty, by means of a new conſtitution, what it may have at diſcretion under the agency of the old? or does it rather undertake the ſevere taſk of bringing this new or-

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der to perfection, that it may create by a more kind management the ability to afford aſſiſtance? It propoſes to diffuſe content, to protect the productive claſſes, to govern us, an experiment which has not yet been tried, in ſome conformity with the genius of the nation. Truly if the officers of the Crown have any other object in view, they give themſelves much unneceſſary trouble. If they entertain deſigns of a leſs gracious kind, they purſue their end by the moſt improbable and unprofitable of all expedients. I have ſomewhere read of a giant who was choaked by a ſix-penny loaf after he had breakfaſted upon wind-mills. Have all the old contrivances for government in Ireland failed? Is the hand paralized that diſpenſes patronage? Has influence become innoxious? To be plain and ſerious, what is that unfavourable meaſure of regulation for Iriſh people, or Iriſh pretenſions, which might not be carried into effect without this concuſſion and this removal, and effected too by means, infinitely leſs troubleſome and invidious? But, ſay they, the Miniſter projects to render this iſland a military depot for the Empire. Then indeed, he is a ſimpleton, who refuſes to leave us this conſtitution, which requires forty thouſand auxiliaries to preſerve its equilibrium. I ſhould think that he deprives himſelf of a very competent excuſe for martial preparations.

An Incorporating Union does not arm the Crown with new powers againſt the people. Miniſters do not gain any thing on the ſide of authority. All their reſources for that effect are as complete and perfect as they could wiſh. The public mind, indeed, requires to be cultivated; from thence alone, reſiſtance to the will of ſuperior men is to be apprehended in Ireland. But after an Union, the public mind will juſt act as powerfully as before; and it may as well communicate its impreſſions to the imperial,

imperial, as to the local legiſlature;* What! after all her exertions to produce a change of government, of which this country ſtands in need, Great Britain is at once to caſt the advantage from her, and play the tyrant to her own detriment. She is to go to Ruſſia and the Morea to look for troops, and will not attach to her a warlike people, her cloſeſt neighbour. She will ſuffer this land in every war to be the advanced poſt of the enemy! Such terrors are for the nurſery, and more ſimple than children are thoſe who will indulge in them. I confeſs if, like the perſons who affect to entertain theſe apprehenſions, I could bring myſelf to think, that the Engliſh government was not to be induced, even by its intereſt, even by the urgent neceſſity of ſelf-preſervation, to deal honeſtly by this kingdom, I ſhould much heſitate to doom a man to death, who turned his thoughts to ſeparation. Good gentlemen, how do you ſupport the Crown, when you lay down, that the ſtate, over which his Majeſty preſides, is the moſt incorrigible of all enemies to this people?

If between government and ſubject there is to be no amneſty—no oblivion of erroneous policy; not a power on earth can ſo correct its rule of conduct, as to create ſatisfaction in the people

* The Britiſh Parliament, it cannot be doubted, is more accuſtomed to treat its ſubjects with attention, and is more eaſy of acceſs than the Iriſh, witneſs the very different manner in which the caſe of the Maroons has been treated, and that of the Catholics, at times diſcuſſed in Ireland. Now, I ſhould think that, abſtracted from political influence, the mere ſentiment of any part of its ſubjects would have more effect upon that, than upon this legiſlature. I do not recollect any circumſtance of a Britiſh Member of Parliament diſtinguiſhing himſelf by invectives againſt the ſubjects for whom he legiſlates.

people. Relations commercial and political are at this day better underſtood, than they were in the middle of the preſent century. The ſcience of ſociety is ſtill in progreſs; and are we to fix our eyes upon the retroſpect, and pine over exploded faults? and are we to imagine that in the great change of maxims that has taken place, one courſe of impolitic proceedings will alone be preſerved, although this ſyſtem of conduct has been renounced, has been diſcarded as injudicious, and atoned for as offenſive; abjured by ſtateſmen, and cenſured by authorities; and all this through the mere love of doing evil; for the apology for putting any reſtraint upon this country, the only one indeed ever offered, that Ireland was not pledged to all the burdens of the empire, is at an end, when the two countries ſhall be formed by an incorporating Union into one government.

If our domeſtic government were to be ſubjected to the ſame jealous teſt, and to the ſame rigid ſcrutiny, has it ſo exerciſed its functions, as to be entitled to the confidence, which, on the ground of England's delinquencies, we are adviſed to withhold from the Imperial Legiſlature? Has ſuch been the blameleſs tenor of its political exiſtence, that we are to throw ourſelves with implicit reliance on its diſcretion? If falſe policy be inexpiable, where is the ſhade of the Popery Laws to repoſe? The Parliament of England abridged our foreign trade; a ſeries of Engliſh writers * expoſed the error of the practice, and it was aboliſhed. The Parliament of Ireland ſubmitted to the inconvenience, and filled up the ſyſtem, where it was incomplete; but it alſo interdicted the people from the cultivation of the land, and from civil liberty. We might have lived

* Child, Decker, Poſtlewaite, Tucker, Smith and Young.

lived without foreign trade; but what is a nation without arts, or manners, or improvement? A law was in force in this kingdom, to a date as recent as the British reſtrictions upon our commerce, which authoriſed any man to fix at five pounds the value of a Papiſt's horſe, or to levy upon that deſcription of the people, the amount of depredations committed upon the coaſt by an enemy. Now I rely upon the manners of the age, that theſe laws will not be again impoſed. I rely upon the ſame manners, and upon an improved ſenſe of public intereſt, that the Catholics will not again be rendered incapable of holding landed property, even although no more than twenty years have elapſed, ſince, in this reſpect, the ſtatute law has been corrected in their favour. Shall we not at leaſt expect the manners of the age, to be as accurately followed, and a judicious ſenſe of public intereſt to be conſulted by an Imperial Legiſlature, as by this domeſtic Parliament, which does not touch the people very cloſely either by delegation or property? It is morally certain, that the Britiſh* government

* No circumſtance has contributed in a greater degree to render the Union popular in ſome parts of Ireland, than the temper diſplayed by the gentlemen who came over, in the beginning of the diſturbances, as officers of the guards and militia regiments. It was not the leaſt of the good conſequences reſulting from that generous and fortunate acceſſion of military ſtrength, that looſe ſuſpicion ceaſed to be followed by the puniſhment of atrocious guilt; and the religious deſcription, under which a man was claſſed, to be received as preſumptive evidence of his criminality. Thoſe who are acquainted with the ſtyle of converſation that prevailed during the laſt ſummer, will readily agree, that Ireland was ſaved from itſelf by the Britiſh reinforcement. The *party* would have choſen in preference, to arm their own adherents, who were certainly very adequate to ſuppreſs the rebellion, but whoſe means and projects for reſtoring peace were no leſs pernicious, than the diſorders they were oppoſed to.

government muſt, for its own ſake, conduct this nation with a view to its improvement; and equally certain, that paſſions muſt eternally ariſe, which will prevent the high Proteſtant aſcendancy from becoming a mild dominion, I conceive that the controverſy between the Miniſter, and a certain party, deep in the oppoſition to this meaſure, might be reduced to a dialogue of this tenor. "Sir, we will undertake to preſerve Ireland to the Crown; but you muſt give up the country to our mode of management." "No, gentlemen, I do not approve of your project; it is a bad ſyſtem, which has been purſued too long, and we are weary of it. I know Ireland may be kept by a government of terror; but a reſourceleſs ſubjection will not anſwer the exigencies of the times. I muſt not only hold Ireland, but make it a profitable member of the empire. I will endeavour to reclaim the people. The Duke of Cumberland reduced Scotland; but a judicious management, and clemency ſecured it. I will make the law apply with equal vigour and vigilance to all claſſes of the Iriſh nation. I hold you gentlemen by your properties; I will gain the affection of the lower people."—This language ſounds ſtrangely in the ears of perſons who cannot imagine any reſource of imperial government, except affixing Ireland by a party to Great-Britain. They exclaim that the connection of the countries is in danger; they made the ſame exclamation, on the different ſteps to the abolition of the popery laws,* and each outcry may be

* Compare the reſolutions of the county of Louth, and thoſe of the Corporations of Dublin, in [illegible] and in 1799.

1792

be explained by the other. The narrow provincial or garriſon policy, to which their minds had been formed, was certainly put to hazard. But the members of the cabinet, not having imbibed their politics in College-green, happened to entertain a more rational and comprehenſive ſcheme both of government and connection.

The law of the land does not bear heavily on the Iriſh people.† They are oppreſſed by the practical diſcipline between rich and poor, and by grievances ariſing from the local management of counties and diſtricts. Then, preſerve the law, and take effectual meaſures to compel a change of practice. The mild application of authority may in the caſe of a very unthinking people, be expected to precede, it certainly cannot fail to produce, a benignant temper.

Let the influence of private men be diminiſhed. Accommodate, in ſome degree to the temper of the people, the manner of forming a fund for the maintenance of the Church, and place that income under the ſafeguard of the laws of property. The weight of landed intereſt gives to the body of Proteſtants an immenſe preponderance; but it is ſuch, as cannot admit of a reaſonable exception. It ſecures every object they hold dear; it ought to ſuffice; it does ſatisfy the moſt valuable and intelligent members of that communion. A preponderance, founded on party pretenſions alone, the

† I have omitted a head which is very material, but which has been already very ſenſibly diſcuſſed. The difference of intereſt between the government and the people, running in adverſe currents, and only to be reconciled by an Union.

the good will decline, and the wiſe will reprobate; let it be legally ſuppreſſed, and practically diſcountenanced, and give Great-Britain an intereſt to guarantee the ſettlement. Such is the ſcheme of pacification, which the ſtate of the country ſeems to demand, and which promiſes to be durable. Such I humbly offer as the Euthanaſia of our ſhort-lived, but boiſterous, and ill-omened independence.

FINIS.